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SCI-FI  
MAGAZINE

280

BEFORE  
**HARRY POTTER...**

# FANTASTIC BEASTS

≡ *AND WHERE TO FIND THEM* ≡

**Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston and Colin Farrell**  
on the exciting return to JK Rowling's wizarding world

**PLUS!**

## DOCTOR STRANGE

Will Marvel's Sorcerer  
reign Supreme?

## BLACK MIRROR

Charlie Brooker on taking his  
dystopian visions Stateside

AND... **CLASS • HUMANS • STAR WARS**

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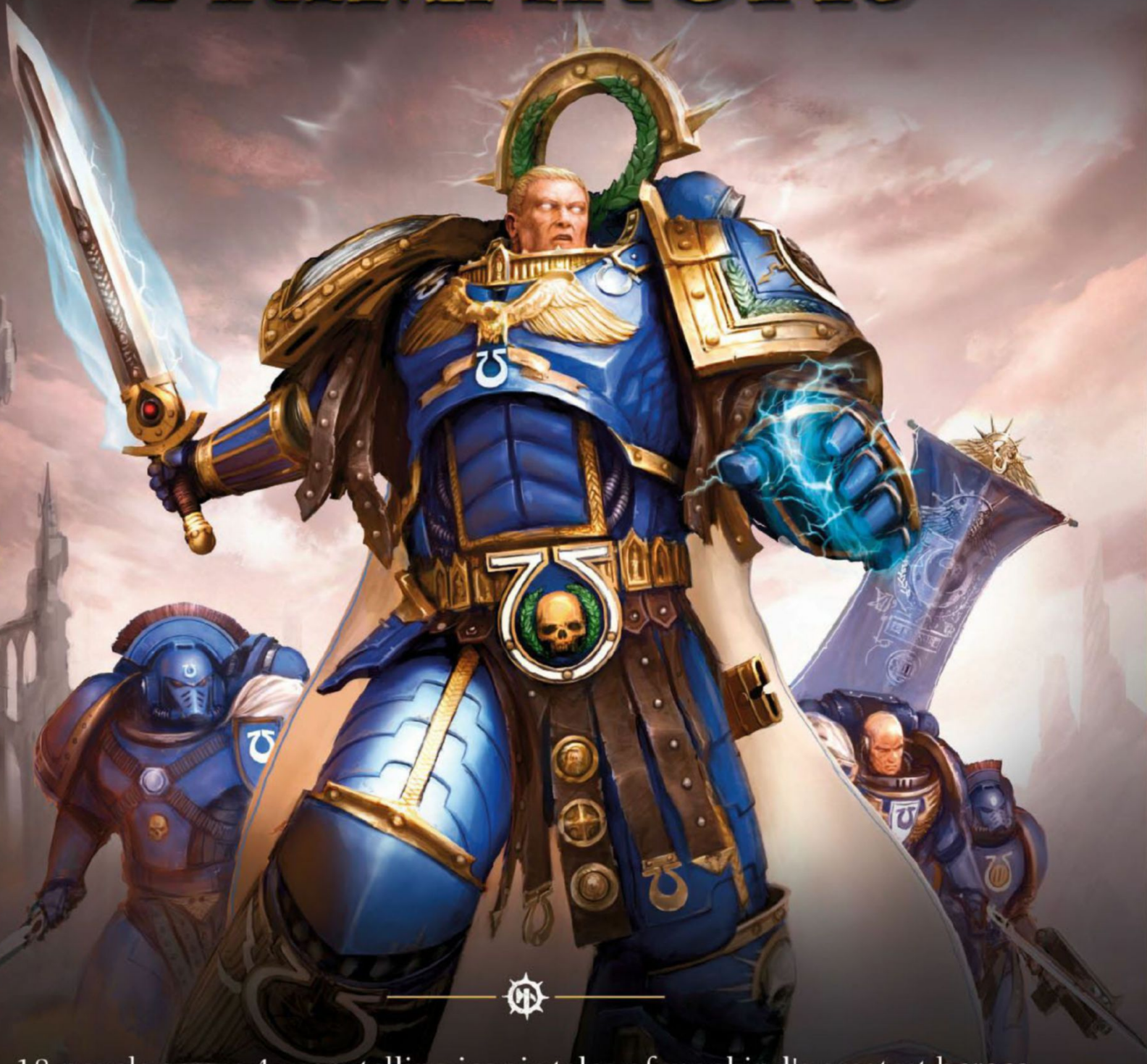
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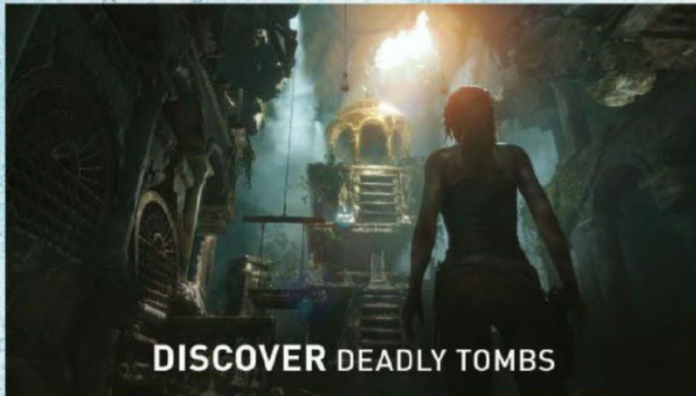
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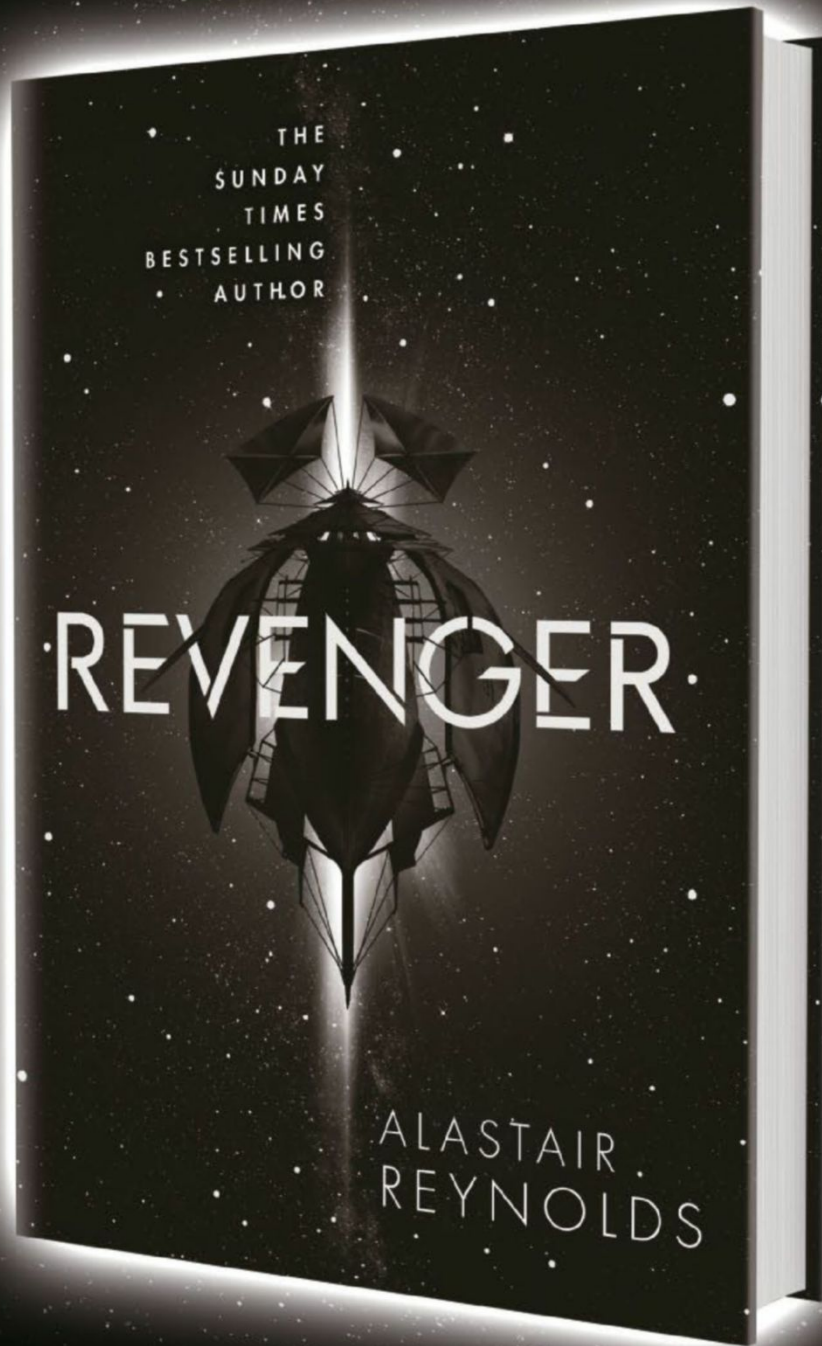
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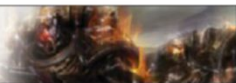
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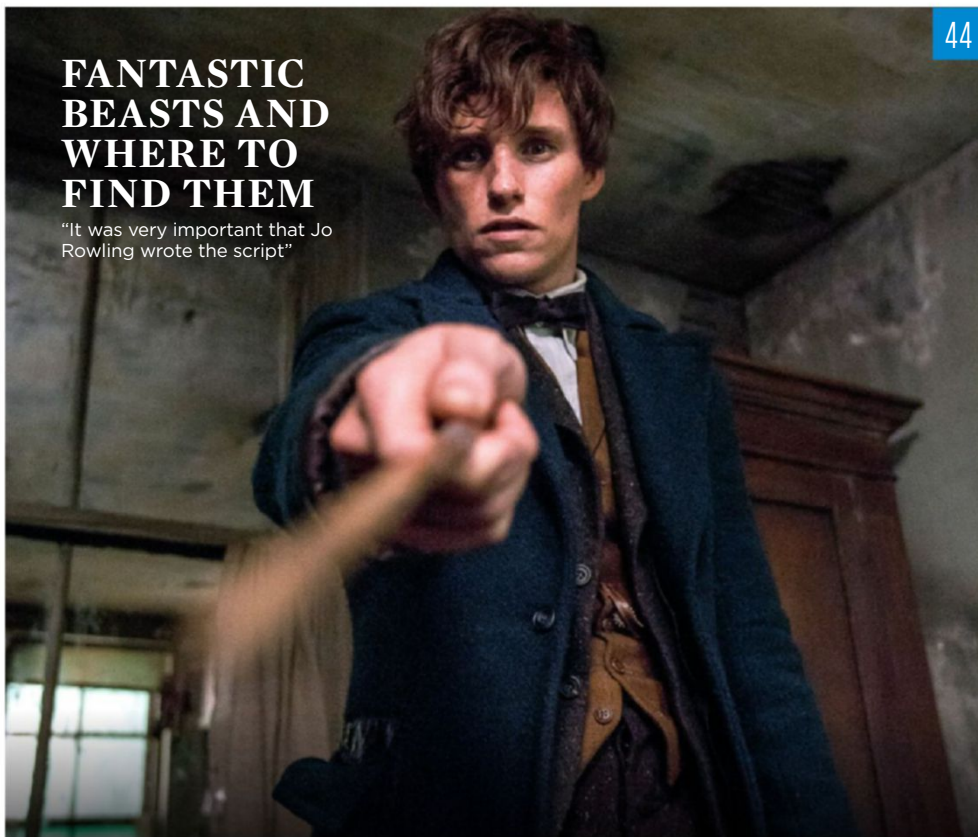




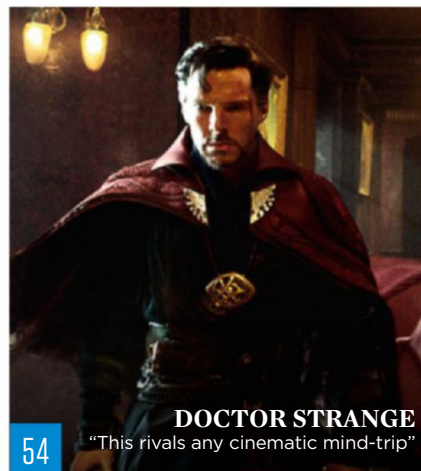


## FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

"It was very important that Jo Rowling wrote the script"



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# Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

## RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ Glad to see Disney is already thinking about more *Star Wars* movies after 2020. Maybe I'll get my Nien Nunb spin-off after all.  
→ Very excited that the *Star Wars* Identities exhibition is coming to the O2 – AT-ATs, Carbonite, Stormtroopers... What more could you want? But more on that next issue...



## NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ Had an early peek at *Arrival* – intense, intelligent and full of wow-worthy visuals. Can't wait to see what Denis Villeneuve does with *Blade Runner 2*.  
→ If '70s-'80s American comics are your sweet spot, you'll love George Khoury's *Comic Book Fever*. An absolute blast of Bronze Age nostalgia.



## IAN BERRIMAN REVIEWS EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ New horror streaming service Shudder ([www.shudder.com](http://www.shudder.com)) looks promising.  
→ Current reading: Jonathan Rigby's latest book on horror cinema, *Euro Gothic* (out 31 October). Recommended.  
→ Quite tempted by the vinyl reissue of the soundtrack to 1979 zombie horror *Shock Waves*...



## JOSH WINNING NEWS EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ *Westworld* is a gun-slingin' good time – sublime echoes of *Ex Machina* and Michael Crichton's original. I could watch the whole thing on a loop.  
→ That *Passengers* trailer was a bit phwoar. Sexiest space movie since *Barbarella*?  
→ Great to chat to Stephen Baxter at the Gollancz Festival.



## RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ Never really been a fan, but found *Red Dwarf XI* pleasantly good-humoured.  
**RANTS**  
→ I find it quite depressing that a director of James Cameron's talent is wasting a decade of his life on four films set in the same universe that hardly anyone wants to see. [But *Avatar*'s the biggest movie of all time! – Ed]



## JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ Can't wait for *Crazyhead*. A little sad to hear that it won't be quite as extreme as *Misfits*, but I have faith in Howard Overman – it's going to be great!  
**RANTS**  
→ Hope *Doctor Strange* will feature some of the Ditko psychedelia. Not a fan of the *Inception*-like look of the trailer.



## CLIFF NEWMAN ART EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ I really enjoyed the first season of *Humans*, and I'm excited to see which direction the new series takes.  
→ I was intrigued by Tim Burton's description of the *Miss Peregrine's Children* books, so I've just ordered the box set. Weird kid adventures and robots – October, sorted.



## WILL SALMON SPECIALS EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ I'm hosting an evening with *Twin Peaks* legend Mark Frost at Toppings in Bath. Come! <http://bit.ly/sfxspeaks>  
→ "The Power Of The Daleks" animated? I'm in! How about "Fury From The Deep" next?  
**RANTS**  
→ *Blair Witch* was okay, but hasn't troubled my dreams.



## NICKY GOTOBED DESIGNER

**RAVES**  
→ Very excited to see *Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children*, absolutely loved the trailer.  
→ On holiday in Lanzarote I tried to do my best Raquel Welch *One Million Years BC* impression on the stunning volcanic landscape.  
→ Loved hearing Daniel Radcliffe crushing on the *Stranger Things* kids on Radio 1.



## MIKE BRENNAN TOTAL FILM ART EDITOR

**RAVES**  
→ Very much looking forward to *Arrival*, looks pretty damn good!  
**RANTS**  
→ *World Of Warcraft* = World of Pain. What absolute Orsch\*t that movie was.  
→ *Red Dwarf* – sorry, I just don't care, some things belong in the past. \*Ducks for cover\*



It's been a whole five years since we last visited JK Rowling's magical world on the big screen – but surely nobody actually thought that *Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows* would be our final trip. As numerous books, the Pottermore website and the smash-hit *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* West End play have shown, Rowling's universe is so vast that there are plenty of stories still left to tell. That's why we're really excited about new movie *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, a 1920s-set prequel that'll show us the magical side of New York – and the creatures that live there. We flew to LA to catch up with stars Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston and Colin Farrell, plus director David Yates, about leaving the world of Muggles behind once more (p44).

That's not the end of the magic this month, as we get the insider intel on Marvel's first big screen dabble with sorcery in *Doctor Strange* (p54). Also, in a bulging *SFX*, there's Charlie Brooker yakking about the return of *Black Mirror* for its biggest series yet (p58), executive producer Gale Anne Hurd talking TV's best-kept secret on *The Walking Dead* (p78), and a trip to the set of *Doctor Who* spin-off *Class* (p64).

Our next issue, on sale Wednesday 9 November, is our celebration of *Star Wars: Rogue One*, the biggest movie of the year. Subscribe by 19 October (see p42 for details) to make sure you don't miss it!



See me on page 80

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor  
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# Red Alert

DECEMBER  
2016

→ NEWS /// INTERVIEWS /// INSIGHT /// VAMPIRES → edited by Josh Winning

CREATOR EXCLUSIVE!

## EXORCISE PARTNERS

The man behind *Misfits* is back, with new E4 demon-hunting show *Crazyhead*

→ Prepare to triple yourself, *Misfits* fans: Howard Overman, creator of the edgy E4 show, is back with another youthful genre show for the channel. This time though he's putting an offbeat spin on demonology, rather than superpowers. Filmed in Bristol, six-part series *Crazyhead* is set in a

world where the underworld exists, and the only way that souls can escape being trapped there is by possessing the living.

Understandably, fans of Overman's Asbo-superheroes show will immediately want to know just how much *Crazyhead* has in common with it. He says there are →

Five seconds later they launched into their award-winning dance routine.

### Highlights



#### 16 SPACE, MAN

→ Introducing *Frontier*, Image Comics' gritty new sci-fi series from Jonathan Hickman.



#### 17 SAVED BY THE BELL

→ Kristen Bell tells us about heavenly new comedy *The Good Place*.



#### 21 X-CEPTION TO THE RULE

→ Mutants are finally invading our small screens in *Legion*!



**SCI-FACT!** *Crazyhead* cast members Susan Wokoma, Riann Steele and Lewis Reeves all had guest roles in *Misfits*.

“If you possess someone and fall in love with a human, does that change you?”

similarities and differences. “Obviously *Misfits* was a comedic take on genre, and this is a comedic take on genre,” Overman explains. “It’s not as extreme as *Misfits* though, as it’s designed for an earlier time slot. I’d also say it’s a warmer show. *Misfits* was always about five people who quite often didn’t really like each other, and were horrible to one another! Whereas this has a real friendship at its core.”

That central relationship is the one between a duo of amateur demon hunters. Cara Theobald plays Amy who, in episode one, learns that her “hallucinations” are actually a special ability to see the faces of the demons walking among us. Enter Susan Wokoma as Raquel, the fellow “see-er” she teams up with. “It’s that classic buddy tale,” Overman explains. “Two lost souls who find each other, and despite their differences the world makes more sense when they’re together. They become each other’s rocks, because for the first time both of them have that person they can be honest with, and is having the same experience as them. They can be their true selves with one another.”

Overman’s starting point was the “funny woman” of this “straight/funny” pairing, Raquel. “I wanted to have this outlandish character who could wield a truncheon and beat people up but also be vulnerable and quirky,” Overman says. “A demon slayer the like of which we hadn’t seen before. Usually they’re the person telling you all the rules, whereas she’s not professional, is not a very good driver, is incompetent... But she’s incredibly loveable for it – that just makes her more real and more human.”

“Raquel’s been able to see the demons since her early teens,” Susan Wokoma explains. “She’s a self-made demon hunter. So she relies on Google, and she bought her taser and her baton off eBay. Since she was 13 she’s been going out trying to waste these guys. And she’s very funny, but she’s also very socially awkward, because of the world telling her that she’s crazy. So as soon as she clocks that Amy can see them too she’s like, ‘A friend! A friend!’”

The demons aren’t necessarily what you might be expecting from a show like this either. “We didn’t want just a simple good or evil thing,” Overman explains. “We wanted the devils to end up having complex feelings themselves. I wanted to give them personality. The best vampire in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*



At least the gag was colour co-ordinated.

was always Angel, because he had character and personality, and was conflicted.” He’s achieved that complexity by making the act of possession something of a two-way street.

“One of the characters possesses a single mum,” Overman reveals. “Now, if you possess someone who has children, what does that do to your demon side? Can you change and come to care for them? If you possess someone and fall in love with a human, does that change you? That’s what you look for – you take a genre trope and try to do something a bit more interesting with it.”

It’s a philosophy he’s also applied to the Big Bad of the piece – head demon Callum, played by Tony Curran (Datak Tarr in *Defiance* and Vincent Van Gogh in *Doctor Who*).

“He’s a stickler for attention to detail,” says Overman, “so when he does something he wants it done competently, and he gets very angry when his minions don’t perform! He’s a foodie, and very stylish – the guy might be evil, but he has panache! In some ways he’s that classic managing director, it’s just what he’s managing is quite evil.”

And don’t expect any kind of centuries-old secret organisation dedicated to protecting humanity, of the sort you often see in this kind of series. These girls are going to have to muddle through on their own. “When a show starts with the line ‘A secret organisation set up to fight...’ I just go, ‘Oh yeah?’” Overman says, with a note of weariness. “I’m much more drawn to a couple of normal people making do and finding out for themselves how to deal with it. Whatever you do in life, to a certain extent we’re all bullshitting, aren’t we? Half the time you’re winging it!” ●

*Crazyhead* starts airing on E4 later in October, with Netflix then streaming it globally.



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No one mentioned the giant banana on the roof.

## I SEE DEMON PEOPLE

Cara Theobald plays Amy, who discovers she's a "see-er"



### Tell us a bit about Amy.

→ She's in her early twenties, and she's been treated for mental illness for most of her teenage years. I live with my best friend Suzanne, who looks after me, I work in a bowling alley, and I'm sort of stuck in a rut. Then I come off my medication and start to see these hallucinations again. I then meet Raquel, who's this whirlwind who comes into my life, and we strike up this unlikely relationship where she introduces me to the world of demons and demon hunting.

### It's quite unusual for a show like this to be female-focused...

→ It's amazing that it's led by girls, but I think it's more universal. There are things about female friendships and the way girls interact, but it's more about young people finding their way under ridiculous circumstances. One of the refreshing things about the project is that it doesn't matter whether they're girls or boys – it's just they happen to be girls, which means we get to kick ass! But that's not making a point, it's just, "Well, why not?"

### Are you a fan of this genre?

→ Not personally, but I think it's a brilliant genre to explore, because it's sort of limitless. Where Howard can take the series is sort of endless, because anything can happen. And while the genre is obviously demons and the underworld, it's also a very dark comedy. It's also very much about this group of friends and the dynamics between them, and them struggling to figure out how to survive in a world where demons are real and you've got to fight them.

### And how do you fight them?

→ There are different methods... one of the best ways to kill a demon is to stick a pole up its arse! And set him on fire. Our first day was filming an exorcism in a derelict factory, with Riann Steele [Suzanne] sort of strapped to the floor. There was a moment at 2am, with me and Susie with these scary clown masks on... When they were setting up the next shot we were entertaining ourselves by dancing at each other with these masks on! We kinda lost our minds!



**SCI-FACT!** *Supernatural* creator Eric Kripke is now showrunner on new sci-fi series *Timeless*.**PRODUCER EXCLUSIVE!**

## KEEP ON KEEPIN' ON

The Winchesters go back to basics for *Supernatural*'s 12th season...

➔ **When Eric Kripke created** *Supernatural*, pitting brothers Sam (Jared Padalecki) and Dean Winchester (Jensen Ackles) against various otherworldly beasts, the story was only supposed to last five seasons. A few years on from that, the show now boasts 241 hours of produced stories as *Supernatural* returns for its 12th season in the US this month with the very appropriately titled episode "Keep Calm And Carry On".

Someone who has been with the series since season one is executive producer, writer, director and now co-showrunner Robert Singer. He tells Red Alert that the show is going back to basics with its storytelling this year. "It's more standalones and a smaller canvas for this year's mythology," Singer reveals. "It's not the apocalypse, it's not God, it's not Amara [Emily Swallow]. It's very much about Sam and Dean. It's about bringing mom back [Mary Winchester played by Samantha Smith] and the hunt for Lucifer is very personal, especially for Cas [Misha Collins]. Everyone has an agenda that will be turned upside down later in the season as the Men of Letters become more prevalent in the storyline, as well as their view of things, as opposed to our guys' view on things."

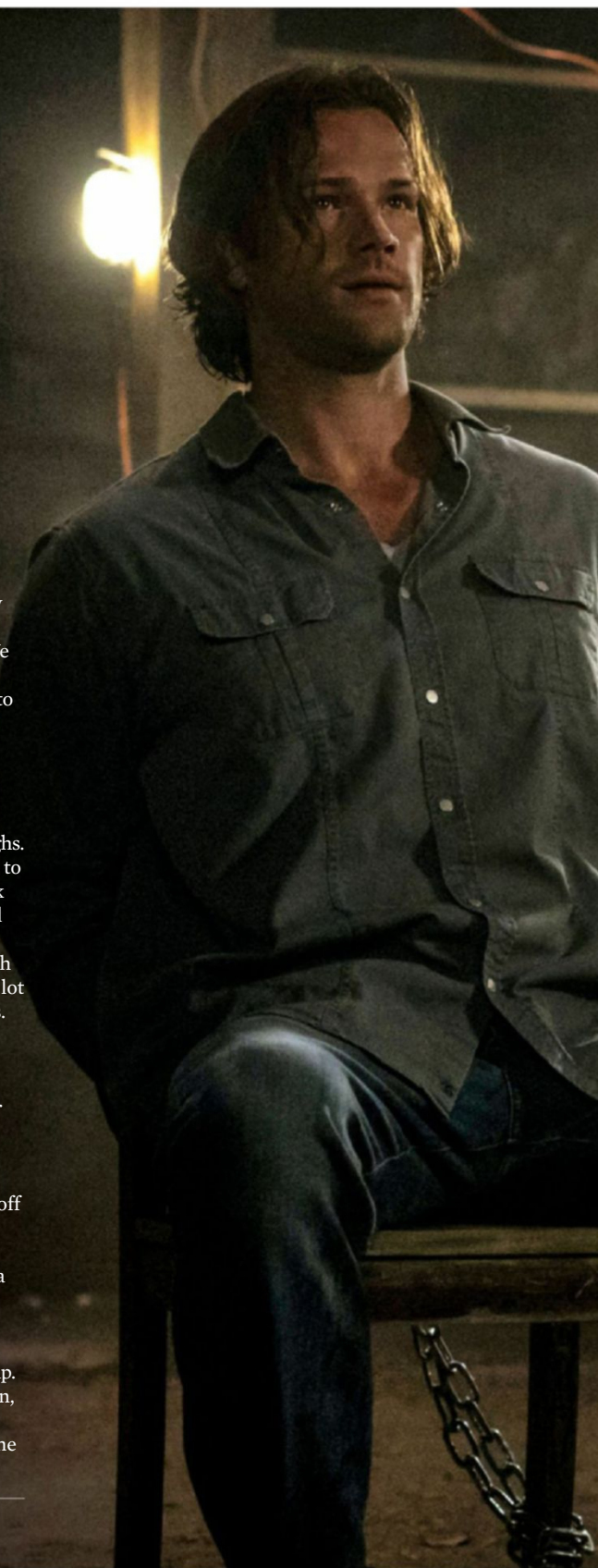
Singer reveals that the show will also refocus on the memorable monster stories that have long been a hallmark of the show. "We always feel that one of our strengths is we make these monsters interesting," he explains. "Not so much creating new monsters, but giving personality to the monsters that we have. I think it's one thing that has kept us on the air for a while and sets us apart from some other shows like this. The Alpha vampire [in season six] was a really interesting character. Kate the werewolf [in season eight] was a really

interesting character. Eric Kripke used to say that every villain is the hero of his own story and that's something we've really lived by. We try to make their stories as interesting as our guys' stories if we can, so we're getting back to interesting villains with their own stories."

In particular, Singer is excited about an upcoming standalone about necromancers. "I think the biggest swing we're taking this year is a story with the Thule, or German necromancers. It's a pretty big swing," he laughs. Otherwise, Singer says fans can look forward to Mary's unexpected return, via the handiwork of Amara in the season 11 finale, to the mortal coil, really shaking up the Winchester family dynamic to its core. With the family matriarch dead and buried for 30 years, there's a whole lot of weirdness to confront as the season begins.

"The way we portray heaven is you go to your own private heaven and it's your best memories," Singer explains. "Mary's best memories are of a baby in a crib and a four or five-year-old boy. Now Sam and Dean are grown and she doesn't know them. And they are doing something she never would have picked for them to do. She's probably pissed off at John Winchester [previously played by Jeffrey Dean Morgan] but he's not around to say anything to. She's a fish out of water. It's a tough transition and I don't think Amara factored any of that when she brought her back. And the boys have always needed this mother figure but they also have a 30-year gap. Where that goes over the course of the season, it will evolve. In the beginning, it's tough on everyone concerned." Business as usual for the Winchesters, then... ●

*Supernatural* season 12 will air on E4 in 2017.





“It’s very much about Sam and Dean. It’s about bringing mom back”



Mom’s back – but a lot’s changed in 30 years...



“What do you mean, you preferred our earlier work?”

“DON’T QUOTE ME”

“THEY TOOK ONE OF THE BEST AMERICAN ACTRESSES AROUND, AMY ADAMS, AND DIDN’T GIVE HER ANYTHING TO DO! I MEAN, HOW STUPID IS THAT?”

Margot Kidder feels sorry for Amy Adams’s DCU treatment.



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## AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ **Game Of Thrones** made history by winning Best Drama for the second year running at the Emmys...

→ ...and Tatiana Maslany picked up Best Actress for **Orphan Black**.

→ Showrunner Melissa Rosenberg says season two of **Jessica Jones** will “advance the character, but you never want to cure the character”. Expect darkness.

→ Ben Barnes will play the villain in Netflix’s **The Punisher**.

→ **Westworld** showrunners Jonathan and Lisa Joy Nolan have a five-season plan for the show. “It’s a really complex interlocking story,” says Lisa Joy.

→ A **Dark Tower** TV series is set to premiere in 2018, and will continue the adventures of the gunslinger (Idris Elba) and Jake (Tom Taylor).

→ “I didn’t sign up to be in a TV show,” says Shailene Woodley of **Divergent**’s small screen jump.

→ **Star Trek Discovery** has been pushed back to May 2017.



## NICK KNOWLES

THE **TV PRESENTER** AND **FILM WRITER** TALKS US THROUGH HIS FAVES

### Favourite SF/fantasy film

→ It would have to be *Blade Runner*. It was revolutionary when it came out. Visually it was absolutely stunning and like nothing else anybody had ever seen. It was like taking film noir into sci-fi, and Rutger Hauer is absolutely bloody fantastic in it.

### Favourite SF/fantasy TV

→ *Star Trek* – it was groundbreaking. Gene Roddenberry was so far ahead of his time with things like the communicator that flipped up – it was 30 years before we got mobile phones that open the same way. Even sliding doors didn’t exist at the time he was writing it, so it was all just extraordinary stuff.

### Favourite SF/fantasy books

→ Anything by Neil Gaiman; there have been some fantastic ones. *Anansi Boys* is amazing. I think *Smoke And Mirrors* is an absolutely seminal work in learning how to write fantasy. *Neverwhere* I think is beautiful. The idea that there is an entire society living underground in London. Once you’ve read that, you never think of London in the same way again.

### Favourite SF/fantasy game

→ When my son was younger I used to take him to the arcade and we used to love climbing into the *Star Wars Racer* machine. It had these vibrating seats and we used to sit next to each other and race against each other. Absolutely loved that. We used to play for hours.

Nick’s new series *The Retreat* is available on iPlayer now.





**SCI-FACT!** Along with fellow comics author Matt Fraction, Jonathan Hickman wrote an episode of *Da Vinci's Demons* in 2014.

Hickman says that SF has "always been about what happens next".

Adrian Tchaikovsky has "levelled up" his writing profile.

WINNER EXCLUSIVE

## TIME LORD

**Adrian Tchaikovsky** tells us about winning the Arthur C Clarke Award...

→ This year was a special one for the Arthur C Clarke Award, which celebrated its 30th birthday in September. And in a time when SF lit is pushing more boundaries than ever, it's fitting that the top award went to Adrian Tchaikovsky's utterly original "spider space opera" *Children Of Time*, which award director Tom Hunter described as possessing "a universal scale and sense of wonder reminiscent of the novels of Sir Arthur C Clarke himself".

"I feel my profile as a writer has 'levelled up' somewhat," Tchaikovsky tells Red Alert of his Clarke success. "To actually get on the shortlist was mind-blowing; to win has been so far beyond previous experience that it took me a long time to process. It's a huge accolade and I'm inordinately proud that my little book about spiders was judged worthy of it."

Set in the near future, *Children Of Time* finds humanity leaving a withering Earth behind and setting a course for a fresh start on Eden – but things don't exactly go to plan. Tchaikovsky won't be resting on his laurels in the wake of his win, though – he's currently putting the finishing touches to *Echoes Of The Fall*, the second entry in his fantasy series, and the author admits "I've kind of exploded this year with extra projects", including short novel *Spiderlight* and a short story in *The Private Life Of Elder Things*. ●



CREATOR EXCLUSIVE

## INTO DARKNESS

Jonathan Hickman is the king of Image's cerebral new comic **Frontier**...

→ Pitched as "like *Star Trek* but super depressing", Jonathan Hickman's new Image series *Frontier* initially appears to resemble the dark flipside of *Trek*'s utopian ideals. Set in a future where humanity is kicked out of an intergalactic alliance for being too violent – before being reluctantly welcomed back when a greater threat in the form of The Accursed rears his head – the one-time regular Marvel scribe insists it actually has little in common with the voyages of the Enterprise.

"It doesn't share any similarities with Gene Roddenberry's vision beyond asking, 'What if things went the other way?'" Hickman tells Red Alert. "That's something I'm sure plenty of people will have trouble with, but if you read the two oral histories of *Star Trek* that just came out, you know that Roddenberry doesn't like *Wrath Of Khan*, which is unquestionably a greater sin than anything I'll be committing."

Hickman also cites Iain M Banks' *Culture* series and Dan Simmons's *Hyperion Cantos* books, as well as online game *Eve Mechanics*, as influences. But despite sending Earth's Mightiest Heroes into the depths of outer space in series like 2013 crossover *Infinity*, he insists that *Frontier* is very different to his Marvel output. "It might share some headspace with *New Avengers*," he muses, "but I don't think it's quite that dark."

Having started out scripting and illustrating series like *The Nightly News*, *Frontier* also sees Hickman return to the drawing board for the first time in almost a decade. "It's not really anything to do with the series itself," he says. "*Frontier* was just the thing that was in my head when my schedule cleared up." Bold indeed. ●

*Frontier* #1 is published by Image Comics on 16 November.



**SCI-FACT!** Bell is the voice of Lucy Stillman in the *Assassin's Creed* videogame franchise.



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

## KRISTEN BELL

The former Veronica Mars lands in heaven in *The Good Place*...

### SHE'S NO ANGEL

“The show combines my two favourite things: comedy and what it means to be a good person. I thought the idea of playing a character [Eleanor Shellstrop] who was extremely self-centred, yet not malicious, was very enticing. She rides this fine line. She's not evil or bad, she's just not concerned with anyone else in the room.”

### THE DEVIL INSIDE

“I do have to be comedic and entertaining, but at the same time I'm not the most likeable person on paper, so I have to do things that endear me to the audience as a character. I have to choose those moments where I am very sincere and literally begging for my life because the only way I can stay in the 'Good Place' is if I know how to execute being a good person and stay undercover.”

### HEAVENLY CASTING

“Ted Danson [who also stars in the show] is an American treasure. I adore him as a human being. I couldn't be happier that I get to spend my days with him.”

### TARNISHED HALO

“This relationship that Eleanor and Michael [Danson] have, there are secrets because he doesn't know she's not supposed to be there. He's in search of the problem because things in the neighbourhood are going awry. Eleanor is basically lying to his face, yet adores him.”

### DIVINE MESSENGER

“There's a special place in my heart for TV and I think I will always come back to it. I like the consistent working environment, seeing the same crew every day and developing a character longer than two months. I'm thrilled to be back in TV and in a project this bizarre.”

*The Good Place* is currently airing in the US on NBC.

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**SCI-FACT!** McCormack played lawyer Will Truman for eight years on *Will & Grace* and admits "I'm not a major sci-fi guy".

## 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

# TRAVELERS

Star **Eric McCormack** gets Red Alert on board with Netflix's new time travel drama

IT HAS LINKS TO *STARGATE* AND *STAR TREK* (SORT OF)

**1** *Travelers* was written, created and produced by Brad Wright, who co-created all three live-action *Stargate* series. "Brad Wright lost a bet," McCormack jokes when asked about being cast in the lead role of Traveler 3468, aka FBI Special Agent Grant MacLaren. "Brad wrote the episode of *The Outer Limits* that I was in 23 years ago so we've been sort of aware of each other for some time." That episode, "Tempests", aired in 1997, a year before McCormack starred in *Free Enterprise*, a comedy about Trekkies featuring William Shatner.

THE FUTURE IS HISTORY

**2** *Travelers'* premise posits that hundreds of years from now humanity will be almost wiped out. The travellers are sent back in time to save it. What brings about the collapse won't be revealed immediately, though. "This is a time travel show where we never leave 2016 because the time travelling is being done from the future to now," McCormack explains. "It's such a crucial pivoting point for a world that we find over the course of the first season goes increasingly wrong."

THE DEAD WILL RISE

**3** Rather than send flesh and blood back in time, future humans have discovered a way to transmit consciousness into minds that

have moments of life left. "We travellers from the future don't arrive in our own bodies," McCormack explains. "We arrive in the form of people who are living right now – it could be anybody; it could be you – but we take their bodies just before they die. We know exactly when and where they die because of social media. So while nobody else in your life knows that technically you were supposed to have died at that moment, we know."

FACEBOOK SAVES THE FUTURE

**4** Mark Zuckerberg as humanity's last hope doesn't sound like an idea that would appeal to privacy advocates. Nonetheless, the notion that personal information shared on sites like Facebook and Twitter will provide an important account of our time is a key element of *Travelers*. "Brad was saying that for him this was really the beginning of the idea," McCormack reveals. "They used to say that history was being written by the winners but now history is being written by everybody. Everybody's crazy texted, tweeted thought will become part of an historical record, which is part of the reason why we travellers come back to this particular time."

IT'S AMERICAN SCI-FI DONE BRITISH STYLE

**5** The series premiere was directed by Nick Hurran, who cut his teeth on the late-1980s British sitcom *Never The Twain* and more recently helmed several episodes of *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock*. "We knew that visually and tone-wise this show was going to have a very, very different feel than a network show," says McCormack. "Nick took what he'd been practicing on *Sherlock* and he set up the shots in the weirdest way. All the other directors were so excited by what he did." ●

*Travelers* airs on Showcase in Canada this month and on Netflix later this year.



**SCI-FACT!** Nina Dobrev left *The Vampire Diaries* at the end of its sixth season. No word yet if she'll return for its final bow.

STAR EXCLUSIVE

## RAISING THE STAKES

The final season of *The Vampire Diaries* is here at last...



**"This is the beginning of the end,"**

says Damon Salvatore (Ian Somerhalder) to brother Stefan (Paul Wesley) in the season eight premiere of *The Vampire Diaries*. He means it, too – not only does this final season bring an end to TV's lone surviving vampire saga, it also marks the end of an era of undead screen romance. *Twilight* is no more, *Being Human* finished years ago, and *True Blood* ended in 2014.

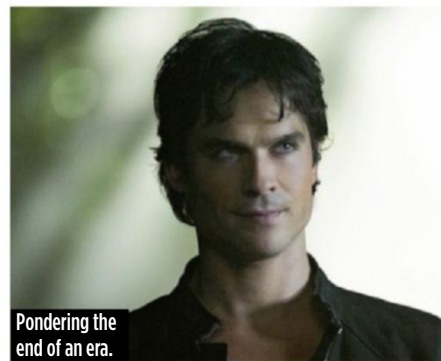
But what kind of resolution would Somerhalder and Wesley like to see for the Salvatore brothers after almost a decade of love, death, hot sex and coldblooded killing? "Happy endings don't happen in Mystic Falls," admits Somerhalder. "But the happy ending that I could see is this girl [Elena] gets to live her life never even knowing these two brothers exist. Talk about the most epic case of robbing the cradle. You have these guys who are like 160, 170 years old, dating an 18-year-old... Honestly, if this town could be rid of vampires, and forget that they ever even existed, I think it would be such an amazing moment for humans, just to be able to go back and live their lives. These supernatural beings serve the purpose of this

story, but at the end of the day it's about humanity. That's what every story is about."

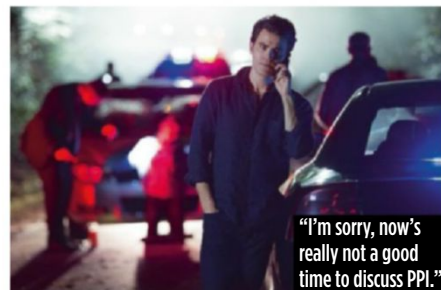
Though it remains to be seen what the show's producers have in store for their characters, Somerhalder and Wesley agree on the appropriate ending for their characters, whether or not their former co-star Nina Dobrev (Elena) returns one last time before the great big fade to black... "Paul and I think," says Somerhalder, "that the Salvatore brothers should go to some beautiful island in the Caribbean, and in their Speedos sit on the beach all night, looking up at the Moon, bonding as brothers, drinking 60-year-old Barbados rum. And when the sun comes up they should have their final toast, give each other a hug, and then throw their rings into the sea and just... pfft. That's a happy ending."

Fans, however, are still busy tweeting their wishes for a *#SterolineJuneWedding* for Stefan and Caroline (Candice King). "So maybe we just need to have a June wedding!" teases Wesley. Fangs for the memories, *Vampire Diaries*...

*The Vampire Diaries* returns to US screens on 21 October, and will air on ITV2 in the UK.



Pondering the end of an era.



"I'm sorry, now's really not a good time to discuss PPI."



**SCI-FACT!** As a kid, Joseph's favourite series was *The Time Tunnel*. He's currently starring in NBC's new time-travel show, *Timeless*.



**STAR EXCLUSIVE**

Paterson Joseph is thankful Neil Gaiman finally decided to track down his coat.

© BBC

## FRIENDS REUNITED

Paterson Joseph reprises his *Neverwhere* role in ***How The Marquis Got His Coat Back...***

➔ **The mercurial Marquis De Carabas** all but stole the show in the BBC's 1996 series *Neverwhere*, but in the process he had something stolen from him: his coat. Two decades on, it's a wrong that Neil Gaiman put right in his short story, *How The Marquis Got His Coat Back*, and Paterson Joseph was delighted to be able to act out the Marquis and his clothing being reunited in a new radio play.

"In the story, the Marquis De Carabas gets it nicked off him by the sewer folk, who take it as a kind of tax," says Joseph. "And it was the most beautiful thing I'd ever worn as a costume on television. When we finished the series, we weren't sure if we were going to make a second one, so they kept it – consequently, someone stole it from the wardrobe department! Cut to 20 years later and Neil says: 'I've been thinking about the Marquis's coat...' Three weeks later, he sent me a couple of pages from a story. I was

ecstatic! A chance to work with Neil Gaiman again, and a chance to bring the Marquis back."

The BBC play also features Bernard Cribbins, Don Warrington, Adrian Lester and a few surprises (our lips are sealed). But was it hard transferring the larger-than-life persona of the Marquis to radio? Joseph says it wasn't. "Neil's such a brilliant writer," he explains. "Verbal dexterity, that's what's great about the Marquis. Is he being sarcastic or serious? Radio-wise, you just concentrate that sense."

And Joseph, who also had a role in the 2015 *Good Omens* radio series, laughs, "There seem to be 20-year gaps between working with Neil. I hope he realises that my life is finite and lets me work with him again. Unlike me, he's going to live forever!" ●

*How The Marquis Got His Coat Back* will air on **BBC Radio 4 on 4 November at 2.15pm.**



**AFTERLIFE**  
CELEBRATING ICONIC  
SCI-FI STARS

121

**DOMINIC MONAGHAN**

*Merry in The Lord Of The Rings*



Monaghan has played not one, but two *SFX*-worthy roles: Charlie Pace in *Lost* and Meriadoc Brandybuck in *The Lord Of The Rings* trilogy. We asked him to choose which to talk about when we met him at Horror Channel FrightFest, where he was premiering new horror *Pet* – due out in the UK next February. He picked Merry because, "as a rock star, Charlie was probably always answering Q&As..."

**Would you play Merry again?**

➔ Yeah, I would. Merry had a lot of qualities that I admired – he looks after his friends, he's sensitive, he loves the environment.

**Did you take anything from the set?**

➔ I got my sword from Rohan. It's heavy and beautiful. If I was getting burgled and I had my sword I'd probably be alright.

**Which aspect of Merry's character do you wish you had?**

➔ He's a great friend. He's willing to die for his friends, and in happier times he was always quick to laugh. If you had the choice to do anything today, why not make people laugh and smile?

**Is there anything from the films that you wish was real?**

➔ The respect for nature that they have in that trilogy is incredible.

**What would it say on his gravestone?**

➔ "A friend, a fighter, and someone who enjoyed the finer things in life. He was surrounded by people that he loved."

© REX (1)



**SCI-FACT!** First appearing in 1985's *New Mutants* #25, Legion was the star of Simon Spurrier's *X-Men Legacy* run in 2012.



## SHOWRUNNER EXCLUSIVE

# GET YOUR FREAK ON

*Fargo* showrunner Noah Hawley talks bringing the X-Verse to the small screen with **Legion**



**Growing up in the 1980s, Noah Hawley pored feverishly** over Chris Claremont and John Byrne's classic *Uncanny X-Men* run. Thirty years on, the *Fargo* showrunner is reuniting with Marvel's Merry Mutants, this time overseeing their first ever live-action TV series: *Legion*.

"What I've always liked about the X-Men is that it's a metaphor for being an outsider, which is obviously very relevant when you're a high-school kid of a certain type," he reveals. "I also liked how the first X-Men movie starts in a Nazi concentration camp, so you know that it's concerned with the real nature of evil."

The first joint venture between Marvel Television and FX Productions, *Legion* centres around David Haller (Dan Stevens), a powerful psychic whose powers manifest through his dissociative identity disorder, resulting in his numerous personas boasting their own mutant abilities. But while *X-Men* director Bryan Singer has hinted that the eight-part series will "relate to some future X-Men movie", Hawley insists that it will initially stand apart.

"There's no overt connection, although in the comics, David Haller is connected to the main X-Men universe," says Hawley. "We don't have access to the movie actors, or their characters, who are protected by the film studio [Twentieth Century Fox], so my feeling was, 'Let's go in the opposite direction and do something completely different.'"

Indeed, in the comics David Haller is Professor Xavier's son, although Hawley is in no hurry to reach that revelation. "We want to find our own way to that storyline before exploring it," he continues, alluding to how *Fargo* didn't reveal any links to the original Coen brothers film until the fourth episode. "There's something satisfying about doing it that way. Let it be its own thing first, and then find a way to connect it to the thing that people love."

Admitting that he was more intrigued by Dan Stevens' turn as a "Terminator-esque supervillain" in 2014 film *The Guest* than his stint in *Downton Abbey*, Hawley believes that it was Stevens' versatility that made him perfect for the role of David Haller. "In *The Guest*, he played a bad guy, who was really charismatic and very comfortable in his body, as well as really masculine and macho," he says. "I liked that contrast of how he could be in a really sensitive period drama but also handle himself physically. He's really great, and it happens so rarely, but when the actor is just right, you look at them and say, 'Now we have a show!'" ●

*Legion* will debut on Fox in the UK and FX in the US in early 2017.



**SCI-FACT!** The Wolverine threequel is rumoured to be set in the same future as *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*.

# WOLVERINE 3

A bearded Hugh Jackman gets ready to hit the road...

## GOING GREY

“I’ve got three words for you guys: Old Man Logan,” Jackman told Comic-Con earlier this year. “Read into it what you will.” Reading away merrily, Wolf-watchers noted Jackman’s on-set beard and surmised that *The Wolverine* director James Mangold’s sequel, scripted by David James Kelly, will adapt the gore-guzzling Mark Millar arc in which Logan roams a dystopian future, powerless and tragedy-stricken. And he’s going grey. True or not, producer Simon Kinberg seemed to fan these Old Man-ly rumours by confirming a future setting. Millar’s MCU character cameos would have to go, but keep the dinosaurs...

## FINAL CUT

#onelasttime, read the tweet. “This will be my last one,” Jackman told America’s *Dr Oz Show*, leaving no room for doubt but lots of room for dramatic opportunities. Is his departure a cue to introduce female Wolverine clone X-23, spiky feet and all? Or find a new man-face for the muttchops? Or tidy up franchise timelines? Whatever happens, a mightily fan-pleasing send-off is promised. “I can tell you, the people who are in this room, the fans,” Jackman told Comic-Con, “it’s going to be the best one yet for you guys.”

## R U SERIOUS?

“We’d made the decision for *Wolverine* to be R-rated before *Deadpool* came out,” Kinberg has said, slamming down fears of a crude cash-in. Jackman worried over the impact on younger fans: “We’ve gotta have an incredible reason to deliberately exclude them,” he said. But Kinberg reckons the R-rated reasoning is the right fit for a “radical, bold, different Wolverine”. The threequel is “violent”, he added,

and “kind of like a Western in its tone”. Kind of like Old Man’s tonal nods to Eastwood’s *Unforgiven*, then?

## SINISTER RUMOUR

The internet claimed Kinberg and Bryan Singer’s *X-Men: Apocalypse* natter-track confirms a role for Mister Sinister – Nathaniel Essex, the genetic string-puller hinted at in the film’s sting. But Mangold tweeted caution: “Uh. Who is Mister Sinister? Sounds kinda corny. Please advise.” At least we know who’s playing the villains. Boyd Holbrook will play an “intense head of security”, says *Deadline*, stoking hopes of appearances from mutant-hater Donald Pierce and his cyborg Reavers. Meanwhile, Richard E Grant plays “a mad scientist type”, reckons *Hollywood Reporter*. Which certainly sounds sinister/Sinister...

## X-TRAS

Of the supports, *Extras*’ Stephen Merchant and *Orange Is The New Black*’s Elizabeth Rodriguez stand out. Also on hand is Patrick Stewart as “a very different Charles Xavier”, according to the man himself. Could he fill Old Man Logan’s Hawkeye duties? Or does the girl spied in set photos suggest a Weapon X/X-23 arc? Maybe, although Liev Schreiber’s quote about a mooted Sabretooth cameo reignites Old rumours: “The Old Man Logan story: that’s appealing...” Either way, expect it to sound glorious: *Drive/Neon Demon* synth auteur Cliff Martinez is definitely scoring. The film’s 2 March 2017 release can’t come quickly enough. ●



## AERIAL ASSAULT

SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ **The Tick**, starring Peter Serafinowicz, is one of three pilots picked up to series by Amazon.

→ **Daredevil**’s Frank Castle may appear in the next season of **Agents Of SHIELD**.

→ **Arrow**’s 100th episode is set to feature the return of two previous cast members.

→ “We’ve got one more season... well, not all of us,” Sophie Turner teases of **Game Of Thrones**. Who could she mean?!

→ Nathan Fillion has admitted he’s shocked Netflix “still” hasn’t decided to give **Firefly** the kiss of life. We live in hope...  
→ Syfy has ordered pilots for three new genre shows: **Haunted** (dark, domestic horror), **The Machine** (a reboot of the 2013 film) and **Happy!** (produced by Grant Morrison and Brian Taylor).  
→ Netflix’s **Lost In Space** reboot series has found its Judy Robinson in the form of *Falling Skies* regular Taylor Russell.



## “DON’T QUOTE ME”

“I THINK THIS CENTURY NEEDS, DESERVES, ITS OWN CULTURE... THAT’S A LONGWINDED WAY OF ME SAYING I AM REALLY, REALLY SICK OF BATMAN.”

Alan Moore doesn’t mince his words.





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Red Alert  
**Image Bank** *Where pictures are greater than words*  
 Dec 2016

**SCI-FACT!** The Lego version of Batman is Morgan Freeman's favourite iteration of the character. Naturally.



**WE ARE FAMILY**

➤ We've already seen Tyler Hoechlin in his shiny new cozzie as Superman, and now The CW have released a fresh shot from *Supergirl* season two showing him in full Clark Kent mode – and he looks every bit the part alongside cuz Kara (Melissa Benoist). Season two of *Supergirl* airs on Sky 1 later this year.

**KNIGHT KNIGHT**

➤ It'll be a while before Ben Affleck suits up in his own Batflick but fear not, the Dark Knight will somersault back into cinemas soon in *The Lego Batman Movie* – and a new poster for the film has just been released which, naturally, puts the little fella (voiced by Will Arnett) front and centre. Plus it gives us one of the taglines of the year... The film opens on 10 February.



**MODEL MISBEHAVIOUR**

➤ Exploring "the ancient idea of artists-as-alchemists", a new exhibit at the Griffin Gallery is showing off some wonderful and weird creations – like this insidious insect sculpture by Tessa Farmer. Other contributors include Alastair Gordon and Darren Harvey Regan. **PERFECTioNISM (part III) – The Alchemy Of Making** runs until 18 November. [www.griffingallery.co.uk](http://www.griffingallery.co.uk)





**SCI-FACT!** Created by Steve Ditko in 1963, Doctor Strange took his name from Marvel anthology *Strange Tales*, which he appeared in.

NEW AUTHOR

## JACQUELYN BENSON

MEET THE COPYWRITER WHOSE DEBUT SENDS A SUFFRAGETTE TO CENTRAL AMERICA



### Tell us about the protagonist of *The Smoke Hunter*...

→ Ellie Mallory is an educated, opinionated, independent woman but, because it's the year 1898, her dream of working as an archaeologist is closed to her. When a map that purports to show the location of a lost ancient city falls into her hands, she can't resist the temptation to follow where it leads her...

### What was your initial idea?

→ I actually set out to write a historical romance novel, but knew I wanted a setting more exotic than Regency England. I also wanted the story to be as much an adventure as it was a romance. In the end, I think the adventure really took over.

### Did you do much research?

→ I read everything I could get my hands on about Mayan history, mythology and archaeology, as well as the history of British Honduras. The similarities between Mayan and Aztec folklore really fascinated me – and ended up inspiring a key element of the plot.

### Are you a big fan of this kind of story?

→ Yes – I grew up on Indiana Jones and loved those stories so much that I came close to attending Dr Jones's alma mater, the University of Chicago, to study Egyptology. Then I realised it was the mad adventure I was really in love with, and that actual archaeology was a bit more tame!

*The Smoke Hunter* is published by Headline on 3 November.



WRITER EXCLUSIVE

Benedict Cumberbatch would probably be showing us his back.

# TEAM STRANGE

There's strength in numbers in **Doctor Strange And The Sorcerers Supreme**



### Due to make his big-screen debut

later this month, Marvel's Master of the Mystic Arts is also set to become the focal point of his very own team book. Written by *Supernatural* scribe Robbie Thompson and drawn by Javier Rodriguez, it won't actually be the good doctor himself who calls the shots in *Doctor Strange And The Sorcerers Supreme*.

"The group is pulled together by none other than Merlin," Thompson tells Red Alert. "He's assembled a group of Sorcerers Supreme to combat something in his own time that he can't handle on his own."

Taken from different moments in history, the line-up includes Yao, a "not-so-ancient" teenage Ancient One, as well as Young Avengers mage Wiccan, Brazilian mage Nine, Apache Sorcerer Supreme Kushala, Sir Isaac Newton and a "slightly evolved" Mindless One called the Mindful One, and, of course, Stephen Strange himself. "By rights, he should be the ringleader but he has just taken an absolute beating in 'Last Days Of Magic'," says Thompson, referring to the recent storyline in Doctor Strange's Jason Aaron-written solo title,

which saw sinister, extra-dimensional beings the Empirikul almost wipe out all magic in the Marvel Universe.

"The Empirikul's actions have unleashed an entity known as the Forgotten," teases Thompson. "This mystical monster was imprisoned by magic, but escapes when the Empirikul destroy magic in our time. Free from his bond after centuries of captivity, the Forgotten has gone back in time to reclaim what was once his. So in the first couple of issues, you can expect to see a desperate Merlin assembling this group on the fly, and we're going to hit the ground running, as they're going to be on their heels right away, and not everyone is going to survive the journey."

Apart from the various Sorcerers Supreme themselves, Thompson hints that some well-known supporting characters will also make an appearance. "I can't give too much away," he teases, "but I would love to see Clea and Wong in the pages of *Doctor Strange And The Sorcerers Supreme*!" ●

*Doctor Strange And The Sorcerers Supreme* is published by Marvel Comics on 26 October.



**SCI-FACT!** Lupita Nyong'o says she's yet to shoot her *Episode VIII* scenes as Maz Kanata.**PRODUCER EXCLUSIVE**

Sara's outfit is never going to survive all that mud.

## TOMORROW'S WORLD

What's happening on the Waverider in season two of *Legends Of Tomorrow*...

➔ **With time-hopping bad guy Vandal Savage** now out of action, the *Legends of Tomorrow* have new issues on their to-do lists – like vintage superhero outfit the Justice Society of America, and the DC TV universe incarnation of bad-guy team-up the Legion of Doom. “It’s a very different kind of dynamic than we had with Vandal, where it was this one guy existing throughout time,” executive producer Marc Guggenheim tells Red Alert. “It frees us up in a really terrific way. This show lives not in the ‘light’ the way *Flash* does, but in the fun and the humour of this crazy group of people. It’s sort of like ‘*Guardians Of The Galaxy: The TV Show*’ – with time travel.”

With Wentworth Miller’s Captain Cold having died and subsequently signed up with the aforementioned Legion (alongside Malcolm Merlyn, Damien Darkh and Reverse-Flash), new seats have opened up on the Waverider.

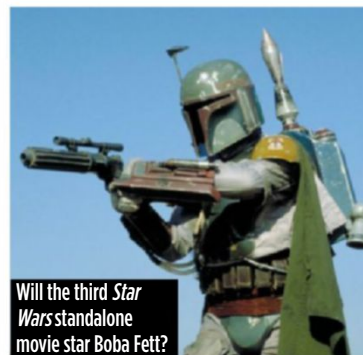
“Nick Zano plays Nathan Heywood,” explains Guggenheim. “He’s a historian, so someone really perfect for a time-travel show, because he knows all the ins and outs of history – even things that a lot of historians don’t know. We sort of say he’s like a time detective. His job is to make deductions and figure things out about time that other people haven’t realised.”

“Maisie Richardson-Sellers plays Amaya, the great-grandmother of Vixen from *Arrow*,” he adds. “She’s a former member of the Justice Society of America, so she’s coming off a team that does everything right, and with a 1940s sensibility. So she looks at Sara like, ‘Wow, you’re open and out there as a bisexual?’ She looks at Mick Rory and goes, ‘What’s an arsonist doing on this team of superheroes? That’s not right!’”

*Legends Of Tomorrow* returns to US screens on 13 October. It will air on Sky 1 in the UK.

## STAR WATCH

A NEWS HOPE



Will the third *Star Wars* standalone movie star Boba Fett?

➔ It’s one to file under “unsurprising”, but a third standalone “*Star Wars* Story” movie has been confirmed for 2020. “I had a meeting with [Lucasfilm boss] Kathy Kennedy and we mapped out – well, we reviewed – the *Star Wars* plans we have till 2020,” said Disney head honcho Bob Iger. “We have movies in development till then and we started talking about what we’re going to do in 2021 and beyond...”

Closer to the present day, it looks like *Episode VIII* might just have a title! Unfortunately, we don’t know what it is yet. Rey herself, Daisy Ridley, told the *My Dad Wrote A Porno* podcast: “I heard a title, but I don’t know if it’s going to be that. I heard the title a long time ago before we started filming. It’s going to be a while before it’s released, I imagine.” Current favourites in the SFX office are *Gentle Ren*, *Leia Cake* and *Smoke On The Water*.

On *Rogue One*, we now know that the music will still be different to what we’ve heard before, but different in a different way to what we were expecting. Alexandre Desplat, the *Godzilla* composer who was lined up to become the first man other than John Williams to score a live-action *Star Wars* movie, has left the film due to “scheduling conflicts”. His replacement is regular JJ Abrams collaborator Michael Giacchino, a man who’s no stranger to *Star Wars* – he was a Stormtrooper in *The Force Awakens*.

Over at Marvel Comics, Kieron Gillen is staying in that galaxy far, far away after his *Darth Vader* run wraps up. Currently titled *Star Wars: Classified*, featuring art from Kev Walker and due in December, his new series’ subject matter remains, er, classified. Finally, Jason Aaron and Salvador Larroca’s ongoing *Star Wars* series is going where no one has gone before by looking into Yoda’s past, following him on a pre-Clone Wars adventure.



**SCI-FACT!** Sam Witwer is also the voice of Emperor Palpatine in *Star Wars Rebels*.



## NEWS WARP

### HIGH-SPEED FACTS

→ *Blade Runner 2* director Denis Villeneuve wants to adapt *Dune*.  
→ *Rings*, sequel to Gore Verbinski's *The Ring*, has been pushed back to February 2017.  
→ Paul Verhoeven isn't a fan of the *Total Recall* and *RoboCop* remakes. "They take these somewhat absurd stories

and make them much too serious," he laments.

→ *Jurassic World 2* is the second part of a trilogy, says director JA Bayona.

→ Bill Hader will voice robot Alpha 5 in the *Power Rangers* movie.

→ Dwayne Johnson's workload has put *GI Joe 3* on ice for now.

→ Chris Pratt has described *Guardians Of The Galaxy 2* as "the biggest spectacle movie of all time".

→ Rumour has it a sequel to *Mad Max: Fury Road* will start filming later this year.

→ Recently departed from *Rogue One*, composer Alexandre Desplat will score Luc Besson's sci-fi epic *Valerian And The City Of A Thousand Planets*.



Ezra and Sabine face new challenges – and a Doctor!

# REBEL HEARTS

*Star Wars Rebels* stars chat season three



### You can't keep a good Sith apprentice down.

He's been chopped in half, descended into madness and had his plans for galactic domination smacked down by his former master Darth Sidious – but still Darth Maul is back for more. The spiky Dathomirian returned in *Star Wars Rebels*' season two finale, and immediately made an impact, blinding "last surviving Jedi" Kanan, and making a good stab at luring his apprentice, Ezra Bridger, towards the Dark Side. Voice actor Sam Witwer says we shouldn't expect Maul to start changing his stripes in season three.

"It's both an evolution and more of the same," he tells Red Alert. "The guy is kind of locked in this loop. He's kind of like Sisyphus, this cursed character who keeps trying to push the boulder up the mountain and then it keeps falling back down. In a weird way this guy is like 50 or 60 years old and he's come to a point where he's realised that everything he's been trying to do in his life hasn't worked, so this is his

last chance to make something of himself. He's seeing some opportunities and trying to seize them."

Season three features Tom Baker as giant Force-sensitive being the Bendu (the second Time Lord to cross over into the *Star Wars* universe after David Tennant), and the eagerly anticipated arrival of Expanded Universe Big Bad Grand Admiral Thrawn. It'll also see Rebel Sabine Wren embracing her Mandalorian roots – not only will she finally get her hands on a Boba Fett-style jetpack, she'll brandish a darksaber, an ancient weapon that's been passed down through generations of her people.

"I think she thinks of herself as a Mandalorian but we haven't got to see her explore that side of herself aside from being really good at blowing things up," says actress Tiya Sircar. "She certainly gets to revisit a lot of things from her past [this year]. It's a nice reminder that she's a Mando, and this is where she comes from. I don't want to say too much, but there's a showdown with some Mandos that we may not have met before, and you suddenly remember this is what she knows, this is where she's from, and what the tensions are between these factions and why. For a long time she hasn't even had to think about those types of things because she hasn't interacted with any Mandos for some time, so it's fun to see that side of her." ●

*Star Wars Rebels* airs on Disney XD on Saturdays.



### “DON'T QUOTE ME”

“IT'S SIMILAR TO HOW *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* HAS A DIFFERENT TONE. FOR THAT, PEOPLE ALWAYS GO, 'OOOH, IT'S DARK', BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT IT NECESSARILY IS.”

Adam Driver is excited about *Episode VIII*.





Nick Setchfield's

## DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



'NUFF SAID!

### STAN LEE: THE MOVIE

◆ *Stan "The Man" Lee* – '70s action hero? It's either the most compellingly off-the-wall idea yet or hard evidence of a crack epidemic ravaging the studio towers of Hollywood. Face front, true believers (and dazed unbelievers too)! Twentieth Century Fox has just bagged the screen rights to Smilin' Stan's life

story, but rather than bring us a straight biopic of Marvel's founding father they're plunging him into a period-set action-adventure flick, channelling the tone of *Kingsman: The Secret Service* and Roger Moore era Bond movies. Expect laser-firing hyperbole and submersible alliteration. **Marty Bowen** and **Wyck Godfrey** – the team behind *Twilight*, *The Maze Runner* and the

imminent *Power Rangers* reboot – will produce, with Lee himself as executive producer, along with **Gill Champion**, his partner at POW! Entertainment. So what's next? *Jack Kirby: Pencil Of Fury*? *Steve Ditko: Libertarian Ninja*?

### NEWCOMERS RENEWED!

#### ALIEN NATION

◆ Now here's a timely remake.

Twentieth Century Fox are tapping **Jeff Nichols** – director of this year's acclaimed *Midnight Special* – to give a contemporary spin to *Alien Nation*, the film that spliced a first contact tale with a buddy-buddy cop flick then upended a truckful of metaphor just to keep things interesting. Set in the then tremblingly near-future of 1991, the 1988 original starred James Caan





Illustration by Paul Cemmick

as a xenophobic LAPD officer partnered with Mandy Patinkin's extra-terrestrial Newcomer, one of 300,000 cosmic refugees struggling to integrate into a wary America. It spawned a short-lived TV show and no less than five TV movies. Nichols will write and direct with **Brian Kavanaugh-Jones** (*Insidious*) and **Sara Greene** (*Pacific Rim*) producing. Rumours that the plot concerns a tangerine-hued demagogue building a giant wall to keep the Newcomers out remain unconfirmed at presstime.

## GENERATION GAME!

### AVATAR 2

🔥 A faint signals reaches us from a distant reality where someone is genuinely thrilled by the thought of four more *Avatar* movies. Oh, wait, it's **James Cameron**... "The story in the sequels really follows Jake and Neytiri and their children," the master of Pandora tells *Variety*. "It's more of a family saga about the struggle with the humans." *Avatar 2* is scheduled for Christmas 2018 (incredibly, that's nine years after the original – we're fairly sure continental drift took less time) but that may slip. "We haven't moved that target yet, but we will if we need to," says Cameron, bullishly. "The important thing for me is not when the first one comes out but the cadence of the release pattern. I want them to be released as close together as possible. If it's an annual appointment to show up at Christmas, I want to make sure that we're able to fulfil on that promise." Thanks, Santa.

## STROKING KILLS!

### BATMAN

🔥 Flash that Bat-signal, Commissioner! There's a new threat to property values in Gotham City! Yes, **Ben Affleck's** Dark Knight is set to grapple with none other than Deathstroke in the next Batman movie. First seen in the pages of *The New Teen Titans* way back in 1980, Deathstroke – in no way to be confused with Deadpool, Marvel's psychotic, scientifically-augmented mercenary whose real



→ **Margot Robbie** officially executive producer on **Harley Quinn** spin-off...

**Benicio Del Toro** in talks for *Predator* reboot... **Billy Crudup** is Barry Allen's father in *The Flash*... **Sausage Party's Conrad Vernon** helming the *Toxic Avenger* remake... **Stanley Tucci** returns for *Transformers: The Last Knight*... **Jackie Earle Haley** joining *Alita: Battle Angel*... **Chloë Grace Moretz** dropping out of *The Little Mermaid*... **Takanori Tsujimoto** directing the CG-animated *Resident Evil: Vendetta*... **Sam Mendes** in talks for live-action adaptation of **Roald Dahl's** *James and The Giant Peach*... **Mark Waters** directing *Magic Camp* for Disney... **Cailee Spaeny** joining **John Boyega** in *Pacific Rim: Maelstrom*... **Cliff Curtis** joining giant shark pic *Meg*... **James McAvoy** circling SF thriller *Extinction*... **Jon Favreau** back as Happy Hogan in *Spider-Man: Homecoming*... **Olivier Megaton** attached to "futuristic Spartacus" tale *The Champion*... **Rebecca Thomas** in the frame to direct *Captain Marvel*... **Rupert Wyatt** helming SF tale *Captive State*...



“It's more of a family saga about the struggle with the humans”

name is Wade Wilson – is a psychotic, scientifically-augmented mercenary whose real name is Slade Wilson. He'll be brought to the big screen by *True Blood's* **Joe Manganiello**, Zack Snyder's second choice to play Superman in *Man Of Steel*. Expect the Batman movie to continue Warner's course correction of the cinematic DCU, moving closer to the core values of the comic books. "It's a hopeful and optimistic view of life," says DC Entertainment president **Geoff Johns**. "Even Batman has a glimmer of that in him. If he didn't think he'd make tomorrow better, he'd stop..."

## CLAWS AND EFFECT!

### BLACK PANTHER

🔥 The DCU may be brightening up but the Marvel Cinematic Universe is set to embrace a darker tone in **Ryan Coogler's** adaptation of Lee and Kirby's jungle superhero. "On one hand, the Marvel movies that I've liked the most are the ones that are funny," star **Chadwick Boseman** tells *Comic Book Resources*. "I love *Ant-Man*. But most of the time the darker superhero movies are the ones that I gravitate towards, that I love the most. So I'm glad that I'm not in an *Ant-Man*. I'm glad that the tone of it may be a little grittier." And Boseman says the champion of Wakanda is a perfect fit for a darker take. "He's not necessarily the comedic element, the sparky stuff that actually works with many of the other characters that you see in comic books. That's not necessarily who he is. There's a mystery and a mystique to him. So all those things to me present a recipe for a darker drama than you might normally see."

## STEELING HIMSELF!

### MAN OF STEEL 2

🔥 Call us crazy but we're not sure Warner Bros is entirely invested in this whole "Superman's dead!" flimflammy. Another clue to the most inevitable resurrection in movie history comes with word that a standalone sequel to 2013's *Man Of Steel* is in active development. And **Henry Cavill** won't just be wearing the cape. This time he'll be a producer too. "Henry has a big appetite," Cavill's manager, **Dany Garcia**, tells *Newsweek*. "He's re-strategising, acquiring property [for his production company], he's filming [*Justice League*] now, he's in development for the Superman standalone... he's beginning to expand that world. It's beautifully teed up. In a year from now, or two years from now, he's going to be a force globally." Hmm. Is this the moment we put our nation's nuclear defences on tactical alert? Maybe divert an aircraft carrier or two?

## HAUNTED HOUSE!

### WINCHESTER

🔥 Draw yourselves a little closer to the campfire as we ask, "Ever heard of the old Winchester place?" You'll find it in San Jose, out on South Winchester Boulevard. It's the mansion that belonged to Sarah Winchester, heiress to the Winchester firearm fortune. Now Sarah was sure she was being haunted by all those poor, damned souls whose lives had been taken by the Winchester repeating rifle. She was convinced there was a curse upon her. She reckoned the only way to beat the spirits was to keep building her home. So the lady kept building. For 38 years, 24 hours a day. Room upon room. Doors upon doors, walls upon walls. Stairways that went nowhere. All to keep the spirits sweet. Now them fancy Hollywood folk are telling her story. Got that **Helen Mirren** in to play her. But they'll learn. Some stories ain't meant to be made into movies. Damn, the fire just went out... Say, is that the sound of sawin'-and-a-hammerin' you hear on the wind? Reckon it's comin' nearer? 🔥



//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////

# First Contact



## THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

**RICHARD EDWARDS,  
EDITOR**



A real mixed mail bag this month – which is how we like it. Beyond our

*Stranger Things*-inspired Hot Topic, there was unsurprisingly loads of chat about our *Red Dwarf* extravaganza last issue, along with a few more philosophical questions, some praise, some moans, and a welcome trip down memory lane to reminisce about the wonderful *Fringe*. We love to hear from you (as long as you go easy on the nasty!), so whatever you want to talk about, the SFX subspace receiver is always open. Communication channels are on the page opposite.

## SFX Hot Topic Your views on the month's big issue

### #IS HOLLYWOOD OVERDOING THE '80S NOSTALGIA?

🔗 **Medium Atomic Weight, email** Reboots, reimaginings, rehashings, it all boils down to the same question – have you got something interesting to say? *RoboCop* (2014) was a great example of a movie taking everything we loved about the original and making it relevant to our surveillance-saturated, privacy-eroding present. *Stranger Things* and *Super 8* (okay, the latter is technically '79) riff on our rose-tinted memories but nevertheless deliver great stories with great acting. I'm happy to keep digging out the legwarmers if it means I've got a rollicking good tale to watch.

**SFX Well put. Era's nowhere near as important as the story you've got to tell.**

🔗 **Marc Farmer, Facebook** One of the ways you know you're getting older is when the decade you grew up in is used as a selling point for different media. I'm not sure it's a bad thing if it's not overdone but the '80s seem to be treated differently to the '60s and '70s. It's almost as if the decade is viewed as an alternate reality where everything is familiar yet different. Apart from *X-Men: Apocalypse*. You wouldn't even know that was set in the '80s if they hadn't told you.

🔗 **Nate Melander, Facebook** Hollywood hasn't even begun to do the '80s. I do wish, however, they would stop it with the '60s nostalgia that the boomers over-glorify.

🔗 **Andy King, Twitter** I'd rather have '80s nostalgia than remakes of '80s films, personally.

🔗 **Edgar Torné, Facebook** *Stranger Things* wasn't that great. It relied solely on nostalgia.

🔗 **Tony Greenall, Twitter** They've overdone remakes for years. At least *Stranger Things* is just a nod to other stuff and not just a rehash.

**SFX And it was wonderful, wasn't it? My favourite TV show of the year by a mile.**

🔗 **Olive Dice, GamesRadar+** I'm loving the good '80s throwbacks in music and games these

*Stranger Things* happen at sea... sorry, we mean in the '80s.







## Get in touch!

@ Email [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) • Facebook [Facebook.com/SFXmagazine](https://www.facebook.com/SFXmagazine)

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“Part of the fun is that the '80s haven't been mined to exhaustion”

days. Synthwave music is the genre I always wanted but never thought would exist, which makes me very happy. I enjoyed *Stranger Things* – I want to see more original '80s set movies, rather than remakes/reboots/sequels to great '80s franchises.

🔗 **Scott James, Facebook** Yes, *Stranger Things* and *The Goldbergs* are great, but part of the fun is that the '80s haven't been mined to exhaustion. Ditto fourth-wall breaking wink-wink-to-the-audience stuff. It will wear thin before too long. I'm struggling to think about clearly definitive styles, cultural touchstones and media that encompass a “'10s” vibe that aren't a throwback to summertime else. Or “ironic”. God, I don't want this to be the decade where everything is tongue-in-cheek, self-aware wackiness – imagine explaining that to your grandkids.

**SFX** Looking past the fact that the '80s produced some of the best genre movies of all time (*Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, *Back To The Future*, *ET*, *Ghostbusters*... I could go on), there's also something about the era that's great for storytelling. Not only does it look broadly similar to today – the '60s are a little TOO retro – the lack of mobile phones and internet makes it a little easier to generate plausible peril.

Look out for the next SFX Hot Topic at [bit.ly/SFXhottopic](http://bit.ly/SFXhottopic)



*Fringe*: gone but not forgotten, no siree.

## #FRINGE BENEFITS

🔗 **Helen, email** I have been watching *Fringe* for the first time and decided to read all your articles, interviews and episode reviews on the show as I watched each episode. I have generally enjoyed your reviews and have watched intently to “spot the Observer” in each episode wondering if I caught sight of them as you did!

But out of the 49 issues from #172 to #235 in which you featured interviews and reviews, you never once had the Fabulous Fringe Team on your front cover. NO FRINGE – SHAME ON YOU!

SHAME ON YOU again because I have been unable to read your reviews of season five episodes, because they only appeared online! And unfortunately there's a third SHAME ON YOU coming. Your recent *The Ultimate Sci-Fi Quiz Book* only featured one question on *Fringe*, despite *Fringe* being in your opinion, “One of the most daringly exciting TV sci-fi shows ever” and one you “didn't want to end”. How about a full section in your next quiz book, eh?

Okay, obsessive rant over, but seriously I'm sorely disappointed that I can't complete my journey of *Fringe* discovery and read your reviews (which generally are pretty great).

**SFX** I've never been so ASHAMED – though it's nice to find someone who likes *Fringe* as much as I do! And fear not, our season five reviews are still online via [GamesRadar+](http://GamesRadar+). Just Google “Fringe”, “GamesRadar” and the episode number (eg 5.01) and you'll find them. Here's one to get you started... <http://bit.ly/SFXFringe501>.

## #LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN

🔗 **Jon Martin, Foelgastell** My copy of *SFX* dropped through the letter box a week or so ago, but due to having just started re-reading Peter F Hamilton's *Void* trilogy and being unable to put it down again (will I ever learn?), I didn't get around to your great mag until this morning... which is still August, just. Yet the spine assures me that it's currently October! So if you guys with your month-twisting ways can't explain a few days, there's no hope for the rest of us!

**SFX** Happy Christmas, Jon! It is December, after all.

## #NOT SO SUPER

🔗 **Mark Jeffreys, email** Mini complaint. Following my usual enjoyable read of your magazine, I was disappointed to find a spoiler →



Don't remake *ET*.  
Don't remake *ET*.  
Don't remake *ET*.





Nice poses boys, but not as good as our covers last issue!

on the TV preview in issue 278 about *Supernatural* (yeah, I know I am still watching it). You stated that not only did the Winchesters' mum come back from the dead, but also that one of the brothers was shot at the end of season 11. Well, to date in the UK we're still watching season 11 and these things haven't yet happened. Thanks for spoiling the end of season 11.

**SFX** Sorry, Mark. So much television these days even we struggle to keep track of everything. Season 11's now all done and dusted on E4, though, so hopefully you can enjoy our season 12 story on p14.

## #THE LONG GAME

📧 **Cliff Homewood, email** I read with interest the other day the fact that *Red Dwarf* is the second longest-running SF TV show as it felt wrong to me, and I suspect it is just a piece of marketing blurb. First of all I suspect a Japanese TV show would take this title. The question is how long a gap is acceptable when stating "longest-running" between the original and revived show. If we are accepting these sort of gaps, and I am taking it for granted we are (*Doctor Who* fan) then *Red Dwarf* is definitely not the second longest-running – I

would suggest that honour would probably go to *The Twilight Zone* (1959-64, revived 1985-87 and again 2002-3) which I suspect will be back on our screens again with a new series sooner or later. Currently its run stands at 44 years which trounces *Red Dwarf*'s 26 years.

So please can people stop calling it the second longest-running science fiction series of all time, as I believe that honour may soon be held by the Japanese anime *Doraemon* (1973 anime, 1979 anime, 2005 anime which is still running thanks to Disney)...

**SFX** This is a really interesting question, Cliff. For starters, do *The Twilight Zone* reboots count as a continuation of the same show? Whether or not *Red Dwarf* is actually the second longest-running, it deserves extra points for still having its original cast intact. None of its rivals can argue the same.

## #BEAT THE PREACHER

📧 **Michael Garner, email** I do not get people's problems with *Preacher*. Having watched *Talking Preacher* with Chris Hardwick (a man who could appear in *SFX* just for being Chris Hardwick [good job he's already been in *My Sci-Fi* – Ed]), Seth Rogen

“It was great to see a brand new series of *Red Dwarf*”

stated that they wanted to make the first season of *Preacher* a jump-on point for everyone, not just comic book fans. I love the comic *Preacher*. I think it's funny and clearly written by a non-American making commentary on the American way of life, love and religion. It was a stroke of genius making season one happen before the start of the comic. It gives a way of showing the relationships without having to squeeze character-driven scenes between nods to comicdom and bat-crap crazy scenes for the water cooler brigade. Season two should start with issue one. I'm saying now that season three of *Preacher* will be some of the finest TV ever.

**SFX** You'll get no arguments from *SFX* Towers, Mike. Hope you enjoyed the free DVD this issue. (Sorry overseas readers, the gift's UK only.)

## #BACK IN THE RED

📧 **James Edwards, email** It was great to see a brand new series of *Red Dwarf* back on our screens on Dave, but as enjoyable as it was, I haven't found the show as funny since series VI myself. I'm not knocking more new adventures of Lister and the crew of *Starbug* – I do love *Red Dwarf* and the cast are amazing as always. I just don't think it's as great as it once was. Still, I'll watch the remainder of series XI and hopefully give series XII a go next year too! I loved your *Red Dwarf* mini-mag free gift in *SFX* 279, by the way!

📧 **Dan Pendleton, Twitter** There are a lot of *Red Dwarf* articles/features out there from various sources. Some good, many awful. *SFX* magazine gets it exactly right!

**SFX** We've had so many kind words about our *Red Dwarf* coverage in issue 279 – thank you all! Also delighted that so many people have been going to such great lengths to hunt down a full quartet of *Red Dwarf* covers. Send us pics of your collections – extra bonus points if you've got a subscriber cover too!

## #Y'KNOW, FOR KIDS

📧 **Neil Hickman, email** Got to disagree with the suggestion that superhero films should be made for a target audience of kids. Most are sort of all ages anyway and there's always the cartoons for the young 'uns.

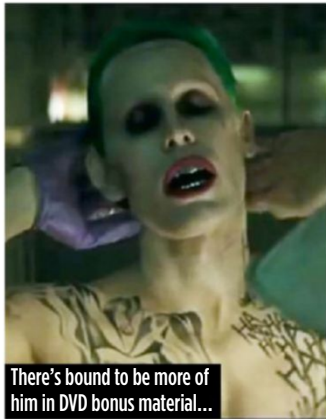
It does the genre no harm at all to have its *Deadpool* and *Suicide Squad*-style films. You don't see many kids in the comic stores and they wouldn't have a clue what was going on if they did pick up a random book – the days of every comic could be someone's first are long gone. *Daredevil* is awesome and you wouldn't want your kids watching that!

**SFX** Saying all superhero movies should just be for kids is as silly as saying all space-set stuff for all cartoons should be for kids – there's room for all in every genre.

## #SECRETS AND LIES

📧 **Stephen McAfee, email** Why do the Hollywood studios seem to give us false trailers? With *Suicide Squad* I'm sure you're aware of the discrepancies between the trailer and the final cut us fans paid to





There's bound to be more of him in DVD bonus material...

see? Whole scenes seemed to be missing – surely this is false advertising? In any other marketing environment it would probably be illegal! *Suicide Squad* was heavily marketed with the Joker, be it posters or scenes as shown in trailers that we never saw. That can't be fair?

**SFX** *Playing devil's advocate, studios usually won't have decided a final cut when trailers are made, so they might not even know the scenes are destined for the cutting room floor. Doesn't stop it being annoying, though...*

## #WE ALSO HEARD FROM

● **Russell Eubanks, email** Am I the only one to notice the resemblance between Theresa May and Harriet Jones (MP for Flydale North)?

**SFX** *Yes, we know who she is.*

● **Ashley Beeching, email** Please pass on my gratitude to Penny Dreadful for recommending *The Invitation*, a fantastically acted and tense psychological horror with lovely cinematography!

● **Craig Hancock, email** That page in *SFX* where staff state their Rants and Raves... Nobody cares!!!! It's a one-sided argument that infuriates the reader! *SFX*? Just stop. You're the reason I can only stay in comic book shops for 10 minutes before walking out empty-handed. You're a paper version of the clichéd, droning, inane fanboy that spoils it for normal people.

**SFX** *Will you be sending us a Christmas card, Craig?*

● **A Hanna, by post** ...like to lick whipped cream off it.

**SFX** *But what was the correspondent writing about? Answers on a postcard...*



## Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

→ Rebecca Smith says: "I bought the Cheshire Cat that was used to promote the computer game *American McGee's Alice* from the main HMV store in London way back in 2000. Once I saw it I called the manager over and asked if I could buy the cat after the promotion had ended and he agreed, and the cash went to charity. I paid £200 and was curious if it had gained or lost value over that period."



## KATHY TAYLOR OF VECTIS SAYS:

*American McGee's cult classic Alice videogame (2000) is an often macabre psychological horror action-adventure game that has its roots within Lewis Carroll's Alice novels. The game, played in a third-person perspective, acts out with the player controlling Alice through a variety of shooting, platform and horror scenarios.*

*With the current interest in gaming your Cheshire Cat large point-of-sale figure is a great piece – at auction I would estimate a wide price band of £200-400. (It is difficult to value as it will be rare, being only produced as a promotional item. Bear in mind that retail/insurance value would be £800.) There is a strong possibility that the item will continue to increase in value as time progresses.*

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo of your item with a few words about what it means to you, to [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com), using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

# SFX

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Future Publishing Ltd Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA  
Email [sfx@futurenet.com](mailto:sfx@futurenet.com) Web [www.gamesradar.com/sfx](http://www.gamesradar.com/sfx)

## EDITORIAL

Editor Richard Edwards, [richard.edwards@futurenet.com](mailto:richard.edwards@futurenet.com)  
Art Editor Jonathan Coates, [jonathan.coates@futurenet.com](mailto:jonathan.coates@futurenet.com)  
Art Editor (Film Group) Cliff Newman, [cliff.newman@futurenet.com](mailto:cliff.newman@futurenet.com)  
Production Editor Russell Lewin, [russell.lewin@futurenet.com](mailto:russell.lewin@futurenet.com)  
Features Editor Nick Setchfield, [nick.setchfield@futurenet.com](mailto:nick.setchfield@futurenet.com)  
Reviews Editor Ian Berriman, [ian.berriman@futurenet.com](mailto:ian.berriman@futurenet.com)  
News Editor Josh Winning, [joshuawinning@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:joshuawinning@yahoo.co.uk)  
US Editor (East Coast) Tara Bennett, [usaeast@sfx.co.uk](mailto:usaeast@sfx.co.uk)  
US Editor (West Coast) Joseph McCabe, [usawest@sfx.co.uk](mailto:usawest@sfx.co.uk)

## CONTRIBUTORS

Sam Ashurst, Alan Barnes, Saxon Bullock, Paul Cemmick, Nick Chen, Nicola Clarke, Sarah Dobbs, Penny Dreadful, Rhian Drinkwater, Robert Fairclough, Rosie Fletcher, Paul Garner, Dave Golder, Nicky Gotobed, Kevin Harley, Stephen Jewell, Stephen Kelly, Matthew Looker, Miriam McDonald, Jayne Nelson, James Nouch, Steve O'Brien, Andrew Osmond, Eddie Robson, Chris Schilling, Michael Simpson, Jonathan Wright

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Commercial Sales Director Clare Dove, [clare.dove@futurenet.com](mailto:clare.dove@futurenet.com)  
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For advertising queries, please contact Steven Pyatt, 01225 687713

## MARKETING

Marketing Manager Kristianne Stanton, [kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com](mailto:kristianne.stanton@futurenet.com)  
Marketing Executive Emma Clapp, [emma.clapp@futurenet.com](mailto:emma.clapp@futurenet.com)

## PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller Frances Twentyman, [frances.twentyman@futurenet.com](mailto:frances.twentyman@futurenet.com)  
Head of Production UK & US Mark Constance, [mark.constance@futurenet.com](mailto:mark.constance@futurenet.com)  
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## CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager Michelle Brock, 020 7429 3683,  
[michelle.brock@seymour.co.uk](mailto:michelle.brock@seymour.co.uk)

## LICENSING

International Director Matt Ellis, [matt.ellis@futurenet.com](mailto:matt.ellis@futurenet.com)  
Tel +44 (0)1225 442244

## THE SENIOR PARTNERS

Group Art Director Graham Dalzell  
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Starting school, moving house (finally), *BoJack Horseman*, tour of Lincolnshire, London heat rash, completing the 92 (again), decent hotels, a batwalk



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"The weirdest thing I've ever seen is a wasp fighting a dragonfly"



## STAR TREK 4

There's a great big universe to explore – so where should the Enterprise boldly go next?

Illustration by Paul Garner

### Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING MOVIES AND TV

#### YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

**HAILING PARAMOUNT COMMAND. THESE ARE THE MISSION PARAMETERS SFX READERS WANT IN THE FOURTH TRIP TO THE KELVIN-VERSE. NOW MAKE IT SO!**

#### BRING BACK CLASSIC ALIENS

**1** The most overwhelming shouts came for bringing back classic aliens, with numerous calls for “BORG!”, “Tribbles!” and even the Ferengi (really, **Davor Edelsinki?**). But the most overwhelming calls were for the Klingons. “Some of the best *Trek* eps involved the Federation and Klingons trying to woo new planets to join either side,” reckons **P Austin**.

#### MORE JAYLAH

**2** *Star Trek Beyond* wasn't perfect, but one thing pretty much everyone can agree on is that Sofia Boutella's alien Jaylah was a standout – and with enrolment at Starfleet Academy hinted at the end of the movie, you'd like to see her join the Enterprise crew full time. “More of Jaylah!” says **Brian Stabler**.

#### THE MIRROR UNIVERSE

**3** Mirror universes have long been a staple of various *Star Trek* TV series, and now you'd like the movies to explore an alternative

version of the Kelvin timeline. “I'd like them to encounter the mirror universe, as a new timeline means a new mirror universe,” says **Adam Smith**. JJ Abrams has already revealed that Chris Hemsworth will be back as George Kirk. Who knows? Maybe a mirror universe could be the plot device that brings him back?

#### DON'T DESTROY THE SHIP

**4** It's almost become a cliché to kill off the USS Enterprise in a *Trek* movie, so after *The Search For Spock*, *Generations* and (near as dammit) *Nemesis*, the ship destruction in *Beyond* was one demise too many. “DON'T DESTROY THE BLOODY SHIP!” yells **John Gardiner**. “Anything else will be fine.”

#### WILLIAM SHATNER

**5** The Kelvin timeline *Trek* movies have resisted the urge to bring back the Shat for three outings now – but that hasn't dimmed your desire to see the original Kirk. **badg3r** puts it particularly eloquently: “William Shatner!”

#### And that's not all they want...

→ **Andy Hall** More of the same as far as I'm concerned. *Beyond* was the best of the three movies so far.  
→ **Mark Penfold Simpson** A tribute to Anton Yelchin at the start, perhaps with a memorial service to Chekov, maybe harking back to Spock's funeral in *Wrath Of Khan*.  
→ **Scott James** Make Karl Urban's Bones front and centre again.  
→ **Medium Atomic Weight** The entire movie set in the mirror universe, the ISS Enterprise leading the brutal Terran regime's assault on the rest of the galaxy... Spock gets a goatee and glimpses a united, peaceful alternate reality: *Star Trek: Man In The High Starbase*.  
→ **Eleanor James** Surely it's time for the *Trek* movies to, at long last,

get a memorable female villain? How about a Klingon commander with a Christopher Plummer-like affinity for Shakespeare – Helen Mirren, perhaps?  
→ **Ziauddin Ahmed Khan** Bring back the excitement of exploring deep space and getting to grips with a completely new civilisation.  
→ **Paul Adonis Rawlings** Give us the Klingons and Romulans.  
→ **Meryl Vincenzo** Harry Mudd played by Nick Frost – maybe have a Cornetto in the movie?  
→ **Gerry New** The Guardian of Forever would be a great start... if they want to go down the path of correcting the timeline.  
→ **Keith Tudor** No more “Sabotage” by the Beastie Boys.

→ **Simon Mitchell** A storyline that leads to the creation of the Borg so they can go at it in a later film!  
→ **Jonathan Mock** Get rid of that new Enterprise at the end of the film. What were they thinking?  
→ **Steve Farmer** A clever time travel paradox mystery story.  
→ **Derek Penn** Whales and time travel is a must.  
→ **Ashley Beeching** Make it a bit more like *Star Trek*!  
→ **Christopher Drewett** More alien crew members.  
→ **Paul Mallon** A good old fashioned space battle.  
→ **Carter Hall** An erasure of the Abrams-verse. Fire all the current actors. Find writers and director with a hard science background.



**GEORGE KIRK**

Chris Hemsworth

#### COMING SOON GAME OF THRONES SERIES 7 AND BOND 25

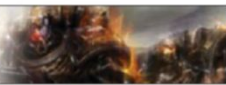
We've overtaken George RR Martin's books, so the Seven Kingdoms are your oyster for the next season of *Game Of Thrones*. And then there's the return of 007...

See [bit.ly/SFXwishlist](http://bit.ly/SFXwishlist) for details.



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# First Contact Dec 2016

## YOUR DREAM CAST

**JAYLAH**

Sofia Boutella

**KLINGON COMMANDER**

Helen Mirren

**MIRROR SPOCK**

Zachary Quinto

**JAMES T KIRK**

Chris Pine







# Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

## PONY BLAIR?

So critics didn't like *Blair Witch* and audiences didn't go to see it. What the hell is wrong with people? *Blair Witch* is great! Scanning the reviews, the most common complaint is that it's too similar to the original – a statement I disagree with on two counts. First, where it is similar to the original, that's a good thing! And second, my biggest problem is that it's not similar enough to the original, upping the shocks and scares, losing the ambiguity and showing you way more witch, so it's jumpy rather than crushingly menacing. But here's a thing. British critics seem to have liked the film more than Americans. *SFX*, *Time Out*, *Radio Times*, *Digital Spy*, *GQ*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *Little White Lies*, *Total Film* and *Empire* all gave it broadly positive reviews. Are we more used to disappointment? Do we find getting lost in the woods more anxiety-making? And does this mean talk of a new franchise is now off the table? I sincerely hope not.

## BEST OF THE FEST

Another year, another FrightFest, filled with guest appearances, too much booze, some really interesting panels and five days holed up in a movie theatre in West London filling up on gory and grisly treats. Here are my top three films from that August Bank Holiday weekend. *Train To Busan* – frantic Korean enclosed-space zombie movie from the director who made *The Fake*. Thrilling. *My Father, Die* – slow, intense and beautiful revenge flick about an abusive father who kills one son and deafens the other, directed by Pierce Brosnan's son, Sean. *The Love Witch* – gorgeous and strange '70s-inspired horror-melodrama about a young woman (Samantha Robinson) using magic and spells to seduce men in a small town, from feminist auteur Anna Biller. Check them out when you can.

## NEW BREED

A brilliant thing is happening. Karyn Kusama, who made *Jennifer's Body* (shut up, I liked it), and the rather better received *The Invitation* has picked up an adaptation of Chase Novak's *Breed* as her next project. I happened

Good witches, bad rewrites and an awesome new body horror on its way

*Blair Witch*: scared audiences away?



Fancy catching the *Train To Busan*?



You're gonna love *The Love Witch*.

to read this book when it first came out and it's great. It follows a couple who travel to Eastern Europe for an expensive and sinister fertility treatment when they're unable to conceive. It works and they have twins! The end. Not the end. This is a really odd, disgusting, visceral body horror that defies expectations and tugs at the heart strings and Kusama is perfect for it. This'll also make her one of the highest profile female horror directors working today, and may well push her into the mainstream – the female James Wan? Give that woman a superhero movie.

## SCREWED!

Guess who's not making a horror movie this month? Juan Carlos Fresnadillo, director of *28 Weeks Later*, that's who. News was announced that Steven Spielberg, whose company DreamWorks was making the film, has halted production of *Haunted* just weeks before the shoot was to begin. It was going to be a ghost story inspired by Henry James's *The Turn Of The Screw*, but the Berg and co stepped in and sacked Fresnadillo, even though they'd already spent \$5 million on the project. Apparently Fresnadillo and writer Scott Z Burns had made big changes to the original script (written by the dudes who penned *The Conjuring* movies, ie people who probably know what they're doing) that Spielberg hated, including the title, the characters and many of the things that happen. Awk-Ward!

## Dreadful things to do

So critics slammed *Blair Witch*? Who cares, have they got their own scare maze at Thorpe Park? Thought not! Joining mazes themed around *Saw*, *Cabin In The Woods* and a creepy carnival is a new *Blair Witch* attraction and another brand new maze called Platform 15, which presumably recreates the horror of standing around looking at your phone while train after train gets cancelled, making you late for work. Go for Halloween!





# FREE PREACHER POSTER FOR SFX READERS

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**T**o celebrate the release of *Preacher* season one on Blu-ray™ and DVD on 17 October, Media Promotions UK has a special offer you won't want to miss. You can claim a limited edition A2 double-sided poster featuring exclusive artwork. And if your free interactive *Preacher* DVD is missing from this issue of *SFX* (UK only) you can also claim a copy online. To claim your free poster, visit [www.mediapromos.co.uk/preacher](http://www.mediapromos.co.uk/preacher). (P&P applies if you claim through the website.)

Based on the cult Vertigo comic book, *Preacher* is a supernatural, twisted and darkly funny drama that follows Jesse Custer (Dominic Cooper), a conflicted preacher in a small Texas town, who is inhabited by a mysterious entity that causes him to develop a highly unusual power. Jesse and his fearless sidekicks – his badass ex-girlfriend Tulip (Ruth Negga) and an Irish vagabond named Cassidy (Joseph Gilgun) – are thrust into a crazy world populated by a cast of characters from Heaven, Hell and everywhere in between.

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# TOO MUCH INFORMATION

Author and journalist **Jason Arnopp** is on a mission against spooky stories that overdo the exposition



“WHY WOULD I WANT TO LEARN HOW FREDDY KRUEGER BECAME FREDDY KRUEGER?”

**W**hen experiencing any given scary story, I prefer my heart to stop way more often than it sinks. And one particular scene is guaranteed to engender that sinking feeling, usually two-thirds of the way through.

In the Too Much Information Library Scene, our traumatised heroes visit this establishment in a desperate bid to discover what the hell is going on in their house. Who or what is their resident phantom? What does it *want*? They have almost as many questions as grey hairs.

Aided by a kindly old librarian who’s lived in this town for over 100 years and harbours the odd nugget of exposition herself, they find an incredibly fortuitous dusty tome or a ludicrously convenient roll of microfiche. This provides the spook’s entire backstory, shedding all too much light on present-day events.

“Hey!” says Hero A, looking up from the tome/microfiche/internet. “You know this entity that’s made our lives a terrifying misery for weeks on end?”

Hero B shudders. “I’ll say I do!”

“Well, according to these old news stories, our ghost is actually a wronged child who died in a fire.”

“Wow, good to know! I don’t feel nearly so afraid now.”

And then they toddle off to try and make a decent fist of an inevitably fear-lite finale.

Granted, this is partly about my own loathing of scary ghosts turning out to be benevolent (although clearly I don’t loathe it enough to stop me pulling that stunt in one of my own stories – writers can be such hypocrites), but the TMI Library nicely illuminates the tightrope facing all writers who aim to unnerve. How much to reveal and how much to hold back?

If I drew a pie chart depicting the causes of fear, over half would be stamped “The Unknown”. This is why so many low-budget fear flicks and *Doctor Who* serials through the ages have made a real virtue of having next-to-nothing to show us. They’ve withheld their spooks for as long as possible, to great effect. Delaying the audience’s gratification costs nothing. Saves cash, in fact.

Generally speaking, we are most transfixed and disturbed by the blank spaces on any narrative canvas. Uncertainty provides the cue for our subconscious minds to fill those gaps with unsettling worst-case scenarios. 1999’s found footage classic *The Blair Witch Project* ingeniously painted only the hollow outlines of a witch and a child-killing hermit onto its canvas, then forced us to supply the rest. But that’s an extreme (and polarising) example and writers couldn’t get away with that all the time. Leave too much blank space too often, and your audience rightly begins to suspect you don’t know the answers yourself.

So we writers must walk the tightrope with care. Sometimes we’ll need to play our cards and deliver the goods. But we should treat various failed attempts to revive horror movie franchises with “origin stories” (why would I ever want to learn how Freddy Krueger became Freddy Krueger?) as valuable cautionary tales and resist the temptation to over-share about our bogeymen. And whatever we *do* choose to reveal, it should ideally happen outside the walls of the TMI Library. ●

Jason Arnopp’s *The Last Days Of Jack Sparks* is out now from Orbit Books. Visit his website at [jasonarnopp.com](http://jasonarnopp.com)





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# WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN THE CASTLE

by Shirley Jackson, 1962

*James Smythe* celebrates a novel of creeping dread

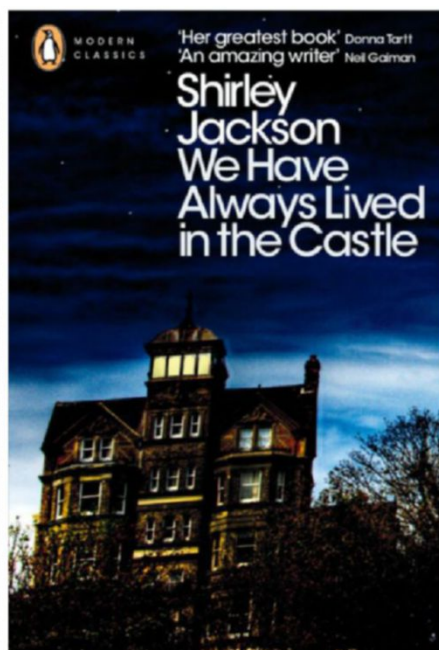


**Shirley Jackson is an** author who carries a large amount of mystique around her. She was a tremendous writer, unappreciated in her time. Her major contribution

to the literary canon was her short story "The Lottery" (1948), which packed about as much darkness and tension into a few thousand words as it's possible to manage. Her novel-writing career was slightly less lauded, if only because the books were, it's safe to say, challenging: novels of psychological torment, of close and invasive horrors. Only in recent years have her novels gained the praise that they ought, mainly because of *The Haunting Of Hill House* (1959), one of the greatest horror novels of all time, and a key influence on many of today's finest horror writers.

But she wrote a novel after *Hill House*, the final book she completed before her death. *We Have Always Lived In The Castle* is, somehow, the sum of all her previous works: it's partly a gothic horror, partly a novel of psychological and agoraphobic torment, and partly a text that deals with the other major theme she became obsessed with – the persecution of otherness. All of which makes it sound far heavier than it is. Because it's also a hugely deceptive book, a book which delights in the lies and torments it can put the reader through as they unpick the threads of the story for themselves.

The novel's narrator is Mary Katherine Blackwood, known as Merricat, an 18-year-old girl living on her family's estate with her sister, Constance, and their dying Uncle Julian. Julian is writing his memoirs, and it's through these



that we learn the torrid history of the Blackwood clan, focusing on the murder of Merricat's parents, aunt and brother six years previously – a mass poisoning of which Merricat, Constance and Julian were the only survivors.

It's a set-up that leads you to believe that the novel is possibly a murder-mystery, which it sort of is: that is one of the knotted threads that is unravelled over the course of the narrative. The other major thread involves Merricat's cousin Charles, come to stay and clearly intent

on finding the money left to the girls. It's when Charles arrives that we start to question Merricat herself. She's an unreliable narrator – all first-person narrators are, I think – but much of the book is spent finding out the extent of her unreliability. Does she know more about the past than she's letting on? Was her sister responsible for murdering their parents? Is Charles quite what he seems? The deceit gets deeper and deeper as the novel unfolds.

The heart of the novel lies in the village near to the family home: a village full of people who distrust and dislike the Blackwood family. (It's worth noting that Jackson's husband, the critic Stanley Hyman, was Jewish, and apparently their family suffered anti-Semitic abuse during their life together, which peaked in tensions in the town in which they were living while Jackson was writing *We Have Always Lived In the Castle*.) It's a novel that's as much about personal and psychological tensions as it is about societal ones.

The horror in this book is pervasive. *Castle* is not built around jump-scares, but instead creates such a sense of creeping dread, of insidious nastiness, that it has lived with me longer than almost any other traditional horror I could care to mention. It's as close to perfect as a book can get. ●

*JP Smythe's latest novel, Dark Made Dawn, is out now, published by Hodder & Stoughton.*

## Like this? Try these!

**THE OTHER**  
by THOMAS TRYON (1971)

→ The story of identical twins Niles and Holland Perry, one of whom is nice and the other decidedly not, is a terrifyingly dark story of sadistic behaviour and manipulative lies.



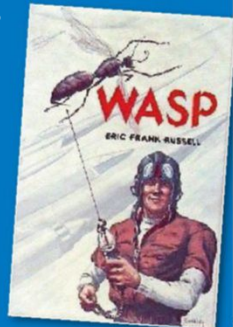
**FLORENCE AND GILES**  
by JOHN HARDING (2010)

→ A sort-of reselling of Henry James' *The Turn Of The Screw*, *Florence And Giles* is a story of untrustworthy children, dead families and the ever-ramping tension of great gothic horror.



## NEXT ISSUE ↓

In our next Book Club (in *SFX* 281, on sale 9 November), *Runemarks and Chocolat* author Joanne Harris looks back at Eric Frank Russell's 1957 novel *Wasp*. Whether you've never read it before or fancy giving it another go, this is your chance to read it before a top writer gives her verdict.





# Next Issue

## STAR WARS: ROGUE ONE

Taking a peek at the Empire's secret Death Star plans...

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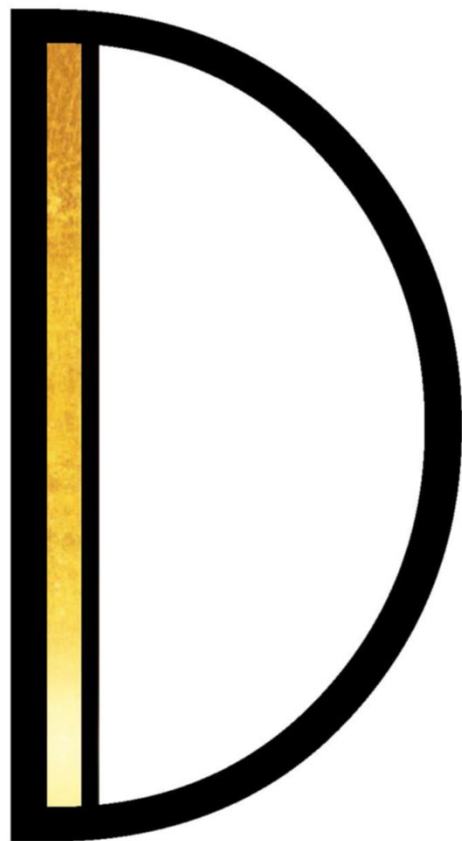






★  
It's a new era for  
*Harry Potter*, but  
just how far can  
JK Rowling's  
Wizarding World go?  
Stephen Kelly duels  
the team behind  
**FANTASTIC BEASTS**  
to find out...





**David Yates wants you to imagine that you're in your favourite restaurant.**

"You go to this place because it's familiar," he says, "and the people who look after you there are lovely. You have a really nice time and a beautiful view; you look out the window and there's this great lake with these beautiful trees. You like coming back here. But one day they bring you this food you've never eaten before. And so the actual sensual experience of what you consume is completely fresh and new, but in a comfortable environment that feels like coming home."

This magical restaurant, in case you're not following, is the director's analogy for the new, expanded universe of *Harry Potter* – known as "JK Rowling's Wizarding World". It's a relatively new concept; a way of telling stories beyond the original novels and films; which began in July with stage sequel *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child*, still ongoing in London. Yet the play, if we're sticking to this metaphor, was just the starter. The main course will be served as cinema: a new and exciting dish called *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, the first film in a brand new trilogy. An idea, according to both Yates and producer David Heyman, that was cooked up not out of franchise-minded cynicism, but by a pull that neither they, nor JK Rowling, could ignore.

"I don't think *Fantastic Beasts...* was a business mandate," says Heyman, "because [Rowling] doesn't need the money. It's both an affection for her audience and an affection for this world... And Jo has a whole wealth of

material in her mind. We would talk amongst ourselves about 'what could we do?' One of the producers, Lionel Wigram, had the idea of making a documentary out of [Rowling's 2001 Comic Relief book] *Fantastic Beasts...*, where Newt Scamander would be off looking for magical creatures. And when that idea was put to Jo she said, 'It's funny, I've been thinking about this myself and I have a completely different story set in America in 1926'. And of course, it was so much better than anything Lionel or I would ever have come up with."

Newt Scamander (Eddie Redmayne) is only mentioned once in the *Harry Potter* books, in *...Philosopher's Stone*, as a name on an old, magical creatures textbook. In 2001, Rowling brought that textbook to life for charity. And now she's fleshed out Scamander himself: a British magizoologist who, after travelling into American wizarding society, inadvertently lets loose a load of magical creatures in prohibition-era New York. Unlike previous *Potter* films, which were mostly adapted by Steve Kloves, it's an idea both conceived and scripted by Rowling; a whole new challenge for the novelist.

"She was a fast learner!" laughs Yates. "And she has quirks and qualities that seasoned screenwriters do not have; novelistic tendencies that we embraced slightly sometimes, because they were pure Jo."

"It was very important that Jo wrote the script because it's her voice that's at the heart of it," adds Heyman. "On *...Cursed Child*, even though Jack Thorne wrote it, she was very much part of creating the world, characters and story. And so too with this. The pleasure of that imagination in the smallest of details is a wonderful thing." →

Director David Yates returns to the *Potter*-verse.



"And then you turn left at the Co-op, straight past the lights..."







Always take your own  
pavement on long-haul trips,  
it saves on shoe leather.







Shooting an  
Englishman  
in New York.

## STRANGE NEW WORLD

Much like *Harry Potter*, *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* is essentially a fish-out-of-water story, this time with a bumbling Brit in a country he doesn't understand. For much like the Muggle worlds, wizarding America is a familiar, yet alien place. On a basic level, this means differences like referring to Muggles as "No-Majs" and having a Magical Congress (MACUSA) instead of a Ministry. Yet it also goes deeper than that. For it's a society built from another history, from the hard-forgotten fact that No-Majs used to burn witches and wizards alive.

"They were persecuted significantly by No-Majs during the Salem witch trial era," explains Yates, "so they've decided to live their lives secretly underground. It's much more segregated in America than it is in Europe, in a sense that it's a community of wizards who have not quite made peace. And Newt, this Brit, lands in the middle of that and finds it offensive that, for example, they can't marry non-wizards. It's lovely dropping a Brit in America in 1926; with his suitcase full of

things that, if they get out, will compromise the security of that community."

And that, of course, is exactly what happens, thanks to the franchise's first non-magical main character Jacob (Dan Fogler), a happy-go-lucky Muggle who opens Newt's suitcase by mistake. This, as you can imagine, sets off a dramatic chain of events, with Newt, having lost his creatures, now trying desperately to get them back. Luckily, he's assisted by Jacob, MACUSA employee Porpentina (Katherine Waterston), and her sister Queenie (Alison Sudol). Unluckily, they're also being pursued by an antagonistic Auror, played by Colin Farrell. And the stakes, as you can imagine, are high; with the fiasco threatening to destroy the peace between wizard and No-Maj.

As with the *Harry Potter* stories, which explored eugenics and racism, the themes of prejudice and division are clear to see. But *Fantastic Beasts...* is not a "message film" according to Heyman; nor is it too attached to the real-life issues of its time, or now.

"The story is very much of the moment," he says, "but the themes resonate because alas, they are timeless... Stigmatisation, openness →



Stop! Tiny  
magical thief!



Doesn't he know  
smoking's bad  
for you?



"VILLAIN?  
HOW DARE  
YOU!"

**COLIN FARRELL**  
is **Percival Graves**

**What can you tell us about your character?**

He is the head Auror and basically director of magical security at MACUSA, which is the Magical Congress of the United States of America.

**Would you say he's the villain of *Fantastic Beasts*?**

Villain? How dare you! So judgemental. No, no, he's a good guy; the kind of guy you want to have a beer with, and some chicken wings.

**How did you prepare to play an Auror?**

Imagination. Mine and JK Rowling's and David Yates'. And the script was very descriptive and beautiful and filled with all these machinations of magic. You can only twirl a wand around in your hotel for so long until you feel like an idiot because... nothing's happening. It can't even change the channel.

**Were you a fan of *Harry Potter* before you signed on?**

I never read the books. My sister read the books. She took care of that. She was delighted when I landed *Fantastic Beasts*. She was so excited about the idea of having a wand. There are a few films where if they're on the television, I just can't turn off, they're just so comforting; and any film in the *Harry Potter* series qualifies as one of those films. It's just such a beautiful and immersive world, that pays due respect to human emotions. I would be a liar if I said being in a trailer where that score kicks in didn't me excited. I'm 40 and I shouldn't say such things.

GETTY (3)



# "HE'S A WEIRD ANOMALY OF THINGS"

**EDDIE REDMAYNE**  
is **Newt Scamander**

**Beyond being a renowned magizoologist, just who is Newt Scamander?**

● He's a nutty character, and slightly spiky. He gets on with his creatures better than human beings. There's a slight sense that he's a bit damaged in his relationship with human beings. But through this film he begins to start making connections. He's a weird anomaly of things; like being quite physically awkward while also being incredibly agile and capable. I love him.

**Did JK Rowling discuss the role with you beforehand?**

● I was lucky enough to meet her just before we started filming. At that point I was so in awe of her. I wanted to be all, "Lovely to meet you!" but we only had an hour so I just went, "So, Newt?" You can ask her anything. Any detail from the smallest nuance. She is so in love with her characters. By that point I'd done so much work on who [Newt] was, and it was two people just talking at each other. It was so helpful.

**Was there anything about Newt that you specifically wanted to nail?**

● Yeah, when [JK Rowling] describes Newt walking through the streets of New York, she describes him as walking to his own rhythm. There's a Buster Keaton vibe quality, she wrote. So I actually decided to work with this guy called Alex Reynolds who's a dancer by trade. Newt has a unique physicality that was very specific to him.

**Did having your very own wand live up to the hype?**

● It was so weird. Because when you get to pick up a wand, your inner nine-year-old is having the best moment of his life. "Oh my god. I get to use one of these!" And then you pick one up and go, "Oh. Why does this feel so weird? What do I do with it?" I got complete stage fright!





“SHE HAS  
SOMETHING  
REALLY  
GREAT TO  
OFFER”

**KATHERINE WATERSTON**  
*is Porpentina*

**We don't know that much about Porpentina. Who is she?**

● Tina works at MACUSA, where she has recently been demoted at work. She was an Auror but she broke the rules and got demoted to a sort of lowly desk job in the basement. So at the beginning of the film she's feeling pretty insecure and frustrated. But she also has this suspicion that she has something really great to offer. She wears a sort of mask of confidence to cover up her insecurity which sometimes makes her a little bit brash and bossy.

**How did you find playing her?**

● It was a process of reconnecting with that child-like part of myself. I mean, we have to do that as actors all the time obviously; to use our imaginations. But I was struck by how far away from playfulness I had gotten. It took practice to be able to have freedom with my wand and stuff like that. It took work. And when I started to feel that connection, I thought, “I don't want to let this go when this job ends.” It's insane how much we disconnect from that as we grow up.

**Do you have a favourite moment from shooting?**

● Well, one of the things you have to do sometimes, for eye-line, is to look at a stick with an X on it and imagine it was a creature. It was a challenge to engage with. Eddie and I were sitting between set-ups and I said, “Man, sometimes I just look at these Xs and it's tricky trying to find something to connect to. I look at them and I don't feel anything.” And Eddie went, “Yeah, yeah. Do you stay in touch with a lot of your exes?” And I was like, “Eddie, the X on the stick!” He thought I was getting really deep!





"YOU WANT  
TO GO AND  
EXPLORE THIS  
WORLD"

**ALISON SUDOL**  
is **Queenie Goldstein**

**We know that Queenie's the sister of Porpentina, but who is she beyond that?**  
She's a delightful character to be able to embody. She is incredibly kind, empathetic, very feminine and traditional, which was an interesting thing to explore in this day and age. She's not two dimensional. She's actually incredibly powerful.

**Is that because she's a Legilimens?**

Yeah, she's able to read minds. As a result she has this deep understanding for people but also she's very focused outward. So there's a lack of self-consciousness to her because she's not worrying about herself, she's looking out into the world. At the same time, she's been cooped up in a life too small for her, and when Jacob and Newt come into her and Tina's life, it's just this opportunity to go on an adventure. So every moment of it, even if it's scary, there's like a real savouring of it for her.

**Were you a fan of Harry Potter before *Fantastic Beasts*?**

I grew up reading the books. I was so sad when they finished.

**As a fan, how does *Fantastic Beasts* compare?**

It's not trying to recreate what we already loved, because you can't duplicate that – that was perfect in itself. As a fan it's everything I would've hoped for. She's so descriptive in the script too. It's kind of what you hoped it would look like. You want to go and explore this world. You want to be able to roam through it.



Welcome to the  
wizarding world. We  
have odd taste in hats.

to the 'other'; repression; division... We wanted to make a film that was emotionally truthful and fun with an underpinning of gravitas and meaning."

## SCHOOL'S OUT

For both Heyman and Yates, working on *Fantastic Beasts*... was a "fresh, but nostalgic" experience, with Yates having directed the final four *Harry Potter* films, and Heyman having produced every *Potter* film to date.

"Not working in a school context was fun to play with," says Heyman, "and working with adults as opposed to children too. You can shoot longer hours! Because when you work with kids you can only shoot with them for a certain amount of time."

"[Working with adults] was a key difference," continues Yates. "The movie feels as grown up as the latter *Potter* films. It has a lot of different colours too. It's whimsical, funny and melancholic in places. Going back to that restaurant analogy, it's a whole meal; you get your starter and – I should be a chef, shouldn't I?"

“It’s whimsical, funny and melancholic in places”

The connective tissue between *Harry Potter* and *Fantastic Beasts*... doesn't stop behind the camera, however. For despite being set 65 years before the events of *...Philosopher's Stone*, there are certain characters – wise, ancient, familiar characters – for fans to look forward to; even if they may have to wait a while to actually see them.

"The worlds are connected," says Yates, "and there are characters that exist in both. [We hear of] Dumbledore in this film, and we see him in the next part of the trilogy. He teaches at Hogwarts... The scenes that Jo has written are lovely. The younger Dumbledore is delightful. He's very mischievous and enormous fun and a bit of a political animal. I'm yet to cast him. I've got a couple of ideas, though..." →

This can probably  
be explained  
away easily.



One day, Hagrid  
will own one of  
these, we're sure.







Ezra Miller and Colin Farrell  
play Credence Barebone  
and Auror Percival Graves.

Yates is getting ahead of himself. But it says a lot, really, that we're talking about the future of *Fantastic Beasts*... before it has even begun. For as the first film in a trilogy – the first film in an exciting new era – it's loaded with potential; with the question, “how far can JK Rowling's Wizarding World go?” After all, *Harry Potter* is not the Marvel Cinematic Universe or modern *Star Wars*. It's a franchise defined by a single creative vision, and there is a limit to how much one woman can do.

“It feels like the beginning of something exciting,” says Yates, “but in terms of where it goes from here, the second script which Jo has written is a really interesting departure

from the first. It's very beautiful and operates slightly differently to this one. Jo certainly has a trilogy in her head, but I don't know if it will go any further than that. It depends.”

“I think that Jo will continue to write as long as she feels an urgency,” adds Heyman. “I can't imagine her ever saying to another writer, ‘why don't you do this’, like the way they do with all those Ian Fleming James Bond books written by other people. That's not going to happen. I can't imagine that happening. It's Jo; the reason it works is Jo.”

*Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*  
opens on 18 November.

## WIZARDING WORLDS

### Five *Harry Potter* spin-offs we want to see

#### THE MARAUDERS

Before Harry, Ron and Hermione, there were the Marauders: Remus Lupin, Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew and Harry's father, James Potter. Powered by friendship, love and betrayal, their spin-off would be the perfect way to explore the events of the First Wizarding War.

#### QUIDDITCH THROUGH THE AGES

Like *Fantastic Beasts*..., *Quidditch Through The Ages* was a charity book JK Rowling wrote in 2001. And also like *Fantastic Beasts*..., it could be fleshed-out

into something truly special. Think *Friday Night Lights*, but with broomsticks.

#### SEVERUS SNAPE AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, ETC

The *Harry Potter* books are rooted firmly in Harry's point of view. Yet as anyone who has finished the series knows, there was an entirely different story happening at the same time – that of

Severus Snape's heroic double life. How fascinating would that be to see?

#### HOGWARTS: ORIGINS

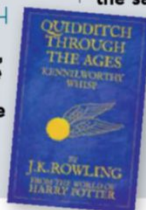
Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and

Wizardry was founded

by four of the most powerful wizards who ever lived: Godric Gryffindor, Helga Hufflepuff, Rowena Ravenclaw, and Salazar Slytherin. But who were they, really? And how did they come to build pop-culture's most famous school?

#### HARRY POTTER: BADASS AUROR

*Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* is a fascinating play about fathers and sons. Yet it's fairly light on what we all really want: the adventures of adult Harry Potter, the Boy Who Lived to Kick Dark Wizard Ass.



“THEY’LL DO  
STUDIES OF JK  
ROWLING’S  
BRAIN!”

**DAN FOGLER**  
is **Jacob Kowalski**

**Jacob is the first Muggle – sorry, No-Maj – main character in *Harry Potter*. How does he react to it all?**

He's come back from World War I and just wants to settle down, have a family and open up a bakery. And he gets swept up in this amazing adventure. I kind of equate him to Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; but instead of Bottom the weaver it's Jacob the baker. He goes and he gets to have fun with the wizards and witches and he gets transformed, and he comes away from it, you know, wondering if the whole thing was a dream. Very similar to Bottom.

**Were you a fan beforehand?**

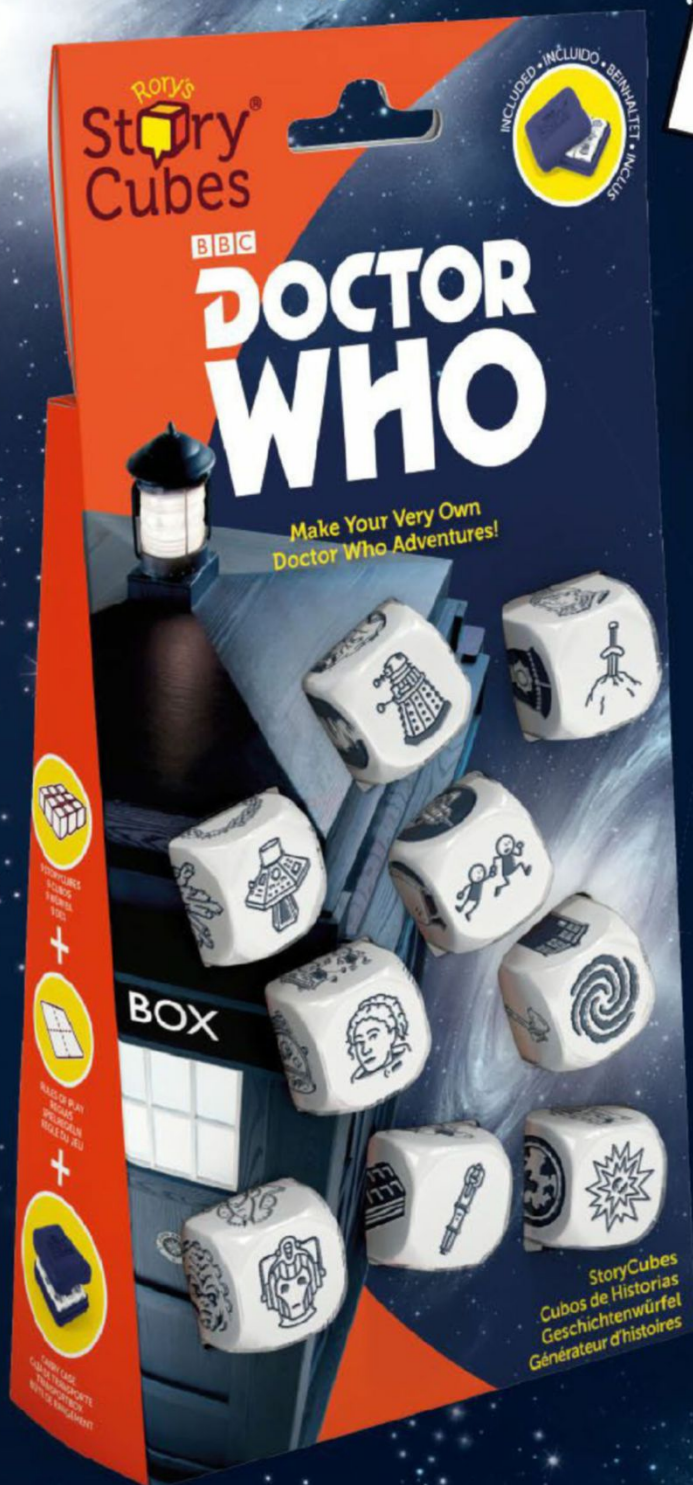
I really enjoyed the movies a lot. And then I said I'd go back after we'd shot and watch them all again and I'm enjoying them even more now I know that I'm a part of it all!

**Were you able to meet Rowling herself?**

She came on set a couple of times. She was very happy. Every time I saw her, she was just as happy as a schoolgirl. You would be too if your dream was suddenly realised in such a mega fashion. And she was just so passionate about relaying stuff about our characters and our characters' futures. You just realise talking to her, “My god, she has thought of every detail. How long has she thought of all this?” They'll do studies of her brain and find similarities to Einstein, that she has his lobes or something.



**NEW**



ONCE UPON A  
SPACE AND TIME,  
THE DOCTOR RETURNED TO GALLIFREY  
TO CONFRONT THE MASTER AND DECIDE  
THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE...



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read the books and the comics.  
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# Your Sorcerer's Ways

Could it be magic?

As Marvel's master of the mystic arts hits the big screen in **DOCTOR STRANGE**, studio president Kevin Feige takes us to the astral plane...

**W**e have a cast that I think has more awards and more award nominations than any single cast we've ever put together," says Kevin Feige, producer of what may be Marvel's most audacious, most ambitious – certainly its most reality-defying – movie yet. "The fact that they're all willing to suit up and step into this very trippy world with us is a testament to both our director Scott Derrickson and the source material that it comes from."

With Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role, *Doctor Strange* takes the Marvel Cinematic Universe to next level weirdness, casting a hex that unlocks the supernatural possibilities of the blockbuster franchise machine. It's a film that has a fan's-eye fidelity to the comics – just like Stan Lee and Steve Ditko's original creation, the cinematic Strange begins as a swaggering, egotistical surgeon, travelling East in search of ancient secrets to fix injuries sustained in a terrible car crash – but it aims to explore new storytelling dimensions, too.

"We have this great journey of this character from this arrogant surgeon to someone who needs to put ego aside and embrace this new

reality that he's learned about," says Feige. "It has probably the best solo origin story of any Marvel character."

The Mists of Munnopor are clearing... The doctor will see you now!

## How does it feel to finally nudge the Marvel Universe into the supernatural genre?

► I've been talking about *Doctor Strange* for many, many years. It's been something that we've wanted to do for a long time because it represents an entirely new aspect to the Marvel Cinematic Universe for us. Just like in the comics, *Doctor Strange* deals with parallel →









## “He’s On The Wrong Side Of The River...”

**Mads Mikkelsen**  
is Kaecilius

### How were you approached for this movie?

The director, Scott Derrickson, pitched it to me, and he ended up saying, “Magic and flying kung fu.” I said, “Hold it right there. I’m on.” It’s a world of a 15-year-old boy’s fantasy. Everything we ever dreamt of when we were kids is what we’re doing right now on this film.

### Who is Kaecilius?

He is part of Kamar-Taj but has a different viewpoint. If the majority is looking for the truth here, he’s looking over there for the truth. So he’s caught up on the wrong side of the river, in a sense. He believes if he’s going that way, then the world will be much more beautiful and all his questions will be answered eventually. He’s trying, like anybody else, to make this world much more beautiful and make this world make sense. He does believe that it’s the door over there and not the door everyone else is opening.

### Why is Benedict Cumberbatch right for Strange?

He’s the perfect choice in the sense that Strange is a character that transforms from one thing to another and Benedict possesses the ability to do that. He can be very physical and very direct. But he can also be very intellectual. And he can also play very arrogant. This character has a fair amount of arrogance in the beginning of the film and his journey is obviously to figure out what purpose that arrogance is serving.



dimensions, alternate dimensions and the multiverse, which unlocks an entirely new area of storytelling for us. There are these street-level narratives of the Marvel Universe that we’ve seen in a lot of films. There is the cosmic level that *Thor* and *Guardians* and *The Avengers* have taken us to but there always has been a very important supernatural side to the Marvel comics, and we haven’t really touched on that. And *Doctor Strange* is our perfect entry point into it.

### How does the supernatural work in the Marvel Cinematic Universe?

► In the Doctor Strange mythology, the supernatural has its basis in physics and in string theory and in quantum mechanics, and if you even know a little bit about any of those things it may as well be magic; it may as well be unbelievable like parallel dimensions – the notion that there could be another dimension right now on top of us that we don’t know about. There could be various worlds. There could be energies from those worlds spilling into our own world. So, Doctor Strange is all about a sect of people who refer to themselves as sorcerers who are aware of this and who can tap into it, and who can defend us from certain things that want to come in from those other dimensions. But they can also utilise the powers available from those other dimensions to assist us here on Earth and in our own realm.

### What does that give you as filmmakers?

What it really does is give a *Matrix/Inception/Miyazaki*-style, mind-bending trip to the MCU.

Look at what Steve Ditko did in those original Doctor Strange comics. We’ve taken that and translated it into an action sequence and a giant blockbuster film.

### What does Benedict Cumberbatch bring to the role of Stephen Strange?

► You need a spectacular actor for this role and the fact that Benedict Cumberbatch agreed to do it and was as excited and as enthusiastic to portray this character as any actor that has ever joined our universe was huge to us. He was somebody that was a prototype for us and this character for many years as we were developing it. He came in for a few meetings and before I even could say it he goes, “Doctor Strange?” and we were like, “Yes.” It was a bit of a journey getting there but the fact that he came on board is one of the great pleasures of working here. He’s great.

### You’ve taken Baron Mordo, a classic villain from the original comics. How does he fit into the story you’re telling?

► Mordo, played by Chewitel Ejiofor, is a mentor in this film. Mordo is a best friend to Stephen Strange. He has gone through the journey that Strange is currently going on before, and he acts as a guide for Strange when he gets to this facility. He introduces him to the Ancient One who is the head teacher for this organisation. Mordo is a cool, normal guy and in a certain way he becomes a partner to Strange. He is a good guy throughout the entire film and that is somewhat different than the

GETTY (3), REX (3), STILL © MARVEL





The Ancient One (Tilda Swinton) teaches Strange a thing or two.

Mordo in the comic books. The Mordo in the comic books is his archnemesis and is somebody who is jealous of Strange from his earliest arrival at this school. But we didn't want to do that; it's very predictable.

#### Are you homaging the classic Steve Ditko costume for Doctor Strange?

► Doctor Strange has a very unique costume with a very high collar and a red cape, based on the ancient robes of this organisation that he finds himself with. And yes, our incredibly talented visual development team used all of that as the basis for what will be embodied by Doctor Strange. It needed to be iconic in its own right. It needed to be very different from any of the other Avengers because Doctor

Strange will most likely find himself standing one day next to Tony Stark, next to Thor, next to the other Avengers. So we wanted him to very much feel a part of the broader team and yet completely individualised and separate from anybody else.

#### What does Scott Derrickson bring as a director?

► Scott Derrickson has a great body of work, and like Joe and Anthony Russo, like Joss Whedon, like Jon Favreau, like Kenneth Branagh, the best of the filmmakers we've worked with have not necessarily done a film like the one we're asking them to do. But they've done enough that they've shown they're incredibly talented. They have unique visions and a love of film and a love of pushing the boundaries of what a movie can be. If you look at Scott's work going back to the earliest days to his most recent films, he's always playing with the genre. He's always subverting the genre. Sometimes he dives right into it, sometimes he twists it. That's exactly what we love to do at Marvel.

#### What does the world of Doctor Strange give the audience as a big-screen experience?

► This is a mind-trip that rivals any cinematic mind-trip that has ever been done before and has taken images out of the comics. Steve Ditko is one of the greatest Marvel artists in history, and it's amazing that we're now able to take what he did in the mid-'60s – these trippy comic panels and comic covers – and put those into big three-dimensional space on a movie screen. The Marvel Cinematic Universe has thrived for us at Marvel Studios. We just take what was great about the comics and unabashedly and without fear throw it up on the big screen. There are images and sequences in *Doctor Strange* that people are already calling the most breathtaking mind-trips that they've ever seen in a movie before. That was our challenge, and that's what we think the team has risen to. ●

*Doctor Strange opens on 25 October.*



## "It's Not A Classic Love Story"

**Rachel McAdams**  
is Dr Christine Palmer

#### What's your character's relationship with Stephen Strange?

I play an ER trauma doctor who specialises in thoracic surgery, at the Metropolitan Hospital in New York City. Stephen is a very famous, successful neurosurgeon at the same hospital that she works at. They are former boyfriend and girlfriend when we pick up in the story. So we start at the end of their relationship, which is a little bit different. It's not a classic love story, which I thought was really clever.

#### Did you research your character in the comic books?

I read a few of the comics. Scott Derrickson, the director, pointed me towards "The Oath" in particular. He thought that would be the most helpful for my character. She's not really in the superhero world yet in this one. She's very much in the real world, in the hospital and in doctor land. For me it was interesting to get to know Strange in terms of the comics and see where my character might potentially be headed.

#### What does a cast like this do for a Marvel project?

It just elevates everything and being able to work with all those amazing actors raises the bar and allows the audience to buy into things more and suspend their disbelief. Tilda looks incredible as the Ancient One. She's really extraordinary. You can't take your eyes off of her and the same with Benedict. His transformation into Strange is really extraordinary.



Don't come if you get travel sickness easily.



A woman with brown hair in a ponytail and bangs, wearing a light pink button-down shirt, is looking down at a white smartphone. She is standing behind a large pane of shattered glass that is cracked and spiderwebbed across the entire frame. The background is dark and out of focus.

# BACK <sup>IN</sup> BLACK

As tech-fear anthology show **BLACK MIRROR** comes to Netflix, creator Charlie Brooker talks to Ian Berriman





**W**e Brits tend to have conflicted feelings about our countrymen having success overseas. It makes you feel like politely waving a small Union Jack on a stick. But there's often an accompanying fear that will spoil things: that your favourite band might return from touring US arenas as coke-addled egomaniacs. So we'll understand if you feel any trepidation about tech-nightmares anthology show *Black Mirror*

leaving Channel 4 behind to go global, with the first of two six-episode orders for streaming giant Netflix.

It's a move that's come about in large part due to how well the show did when it debuted on Netflix US in December 2014, when the critical garlands included a tweet of praise from Stephen King – something which delighted creator Charlie Brooker.

"I'm a big Stephen King fan," says Brooker. "Who wouldn't be chuffed about that? When we were making the original series we weren't thinking in terms of people around the world at all – we were just thinking, 'Let's not fuck this up!' We figured it was a pretty British show."

So does moving to a new home fundamentally change the approach? The fact that episode one of the new batch, "San Junipero", opens in California in 1987 might cause you to wonder whether there's a drive to internationalise the show.

"Well, we're aware this is being launched globally, so people in Mumbai will be able to watch it at the same time as people in Kettering," acknowledges Brooker. "So that's in our head somewhere. And there's more variance in setting. But we've still got some very British things going on throughout, and British settings for several episodes, so hopefully we're marrying a global outlook with a British sensibility. We're still flying the flag!" →



When it comes to the nostalgia-fest that's "San Junipero" – centred on a nightclub where pretty young things dance to the likes of The Bangles and Belinda Carlisle – it's a case of the story naturally suggesting the setting.

"I was thinking, 'How could we do a period episode?'" Brooker explains. "More than thinking, 'We're on Netflix now, so let's give this one an American setting.' It suited the story. Also, it was unexpected. When you put *Black Mirror* on you probably expect to see someone with a translucent phone frowning, going, 'Argh, these machines are ruining my life!' So I thought, 'Well okay, we'll open in 1987 California. We don't want to just be the show where every week someone has their life ruined by a device. Which isn't to say that we don't have moments that are really horrible, because we do! But there's slightly more variance in tone.'"

That's certainly true of "San Junipero", which focuses on a touching romance, and has a conclusion Brooker describes as "the closest we get to a feelgood ending". Yes, the series which brought us mass-participation punishment of a child-killer and the Prime Minister shagging a pig now has an episode you could legitimately describe as "heartwarming". "It's not always a complete and utter bleakfest," Brooker adds. "We've got slightly more satirical episodes, as well as unfolding nightmares."

Would he ever do an out-and-out comedy, like *The Twilight Zone* used to?

"Well, one is probably the closest to that that we've done. But there's always little jokes in there. Because an American audience doesn't have knowledge of me as a comedy writer they assume I'm, like, the Unabomber – some anti-technology zealot who's trying to warn the world! But nine times out of ten the stories come about from an idea that makes me fucking piss myself! Then it's interesting to play it out straight."



## “American audiences assume I’m, like, the Unabomber”

As well as a greater range of setting and tone, season three has a little more visual variety.

"When we did the first season it started with the contemporary Britain of 'The National Anthem'," Brooker recalls, "Then went to 'Fifteen Million Merits', a completely fantastical world. We hadn't done that in the second season – things were a little more normalised. So we've got weirder stuff going on in some of these episodes."

If you're fretting that transplanting *Black Mirror* to Netflix might somehow result in dilution or artistic compromise, rest assured: these moves to put a few more flavours in the chocolate box aren't the result of the clouds parting as a Netflix exec delivers a directive in the booming tones of God.

"They've been very hands-off," Brooker says. "Pretty much all they said was, 'You've done seven episodes so far. We like those. Carry on doing that sort of thing.'"

But being involved with the streaming

service has had an impact on the budget. "We were aware that there was a bigger canvas to play with," Brooker acknowledges. Netflix's profile, reach and reputation have also helped attract a different order of talent – including directors with the name recognition of *Atonement*'s Joe Wright and *10 Cloverfield Lane*'s Dan Trachtenberg. Though Brooker's had a hand in every script, he's also welcomed new collaborators, including *Parks And Recreation*'s Rashida Jones (who played Ann) and Mike Schur (the show's creator).

"People are aware that there's quite a lot of creative freedom," Brooker explains, "and that it's an immediate global platform. We're working to a large scale, with some very experienced directors. And the different directors each bring a different sensibility. Dan's film plays to his strengths in terms of tension and claustrophobia, and has a delicious sense of fun. Joe Wright's is extremely cinematic, has an idiosyncratic visual style and its own palette, and again is probably not what people are expecting from *Black Mirror*."

With all six episodes due to go live simultaneously, Brooker says he's fascinated to see how audiences will respond to the new delivery method.

"I think it's the perfect format for anthology shows. *The Twilight Zone* was often on the verge of cancellation because it didn't rate that well – because there's no cliffhanger, there's no reason to tune in next week. We've been approaching them – with our hifalutin' ways – as little films. And because there's a lot of variety throughout the six, it'll be like having a little short film festival delivered to you."

Just for a moment, he can savour the thought. Then he remembers.

"And then there's another six a year down the line, which I'm already worrying about..." ●

© REX (1)

*Black Mirror* comes to Netflix on 21 October.

## MIRROR UNIVERSE

Your guide to the new series



### "SAN JUNIPERO"

**DIRECTOR** Owen Harris  
(*Kill Your Friends*, *Holy Flying Circus*)  
**CAST** Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Mackenzie Davis, Gavin Stenhouse

In 1987 California, sparks fly between the tomboyish Yorkie and the alluring Kelly...



### "SHUT UP AND DANCE"

**DIRECTOR** James Watkins  
(*The Woman In Black*)  
**CO-WRITER** Will Bridges  
**CAST** Alex Lawther, Jerome Flynn

A withdrawn 19-year-old stumbles into an online trap... Present-day, with no science fiction element.



### "NOSEDIVE"

**DIRECTOR** Joe Wright  
(*Pan*, *Hanna*)  
**CO-WRITERS** Rashida Jones, Mike Schur  
**CAST** Bryce Dallas Howard, Alice Eve

Satire set in a world where every social interaction is rated. "A cheerful pastel nightmare," says Brooker.



### "MEN AGAINST FIRE"

**DIRECTOR** Jakob Verbruggen  
(*London Spy*)  
**CAST** Charles Babalola, Malachi Kirby, Madeline Brewer

A military story, in which future soldiers protect villagers from vicious feral mutants.



### "HATED IN THE NATION"

**DIRECTOR** James Hawes  
(*Doctor Who*)  
**CAST** Kelly Macdonald, Faye Marsay

A police officer investigates deaths linked to social media in this police-procedural. This one's 90 minutes long.



### "PLAYTEST"

**DIRECTOR** Dan Trachtenberg  
(*10 Cloverfield Lane*)  
**CAST** Wyatt Russell, Hannah John-Kamen

A thrillseeker tests an advanced videogame in this imaginative horror romp. "Has a real energy and frivolity to it," says Brooker.



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## SIMONE MISSICK

Meet the *Luke Cage* star kicking the ass of Harlem

Words by Nick Setchfield /// Photography by Maarten de Boer

When *SFX* asks Simone Missick how it feels to play one of the first black female heroes in comics, she corrects us with a smile. “The first,” Missick insists, proudly. “The first.” Misty Knight debuted in 1975, a badass cop who lost an arm to a bomb only to be gifted with a cybernetic substitute by none other than Tony Stark. Imagine Pam Grier fused with the Bionic Woman only somehow, impossibly, cooler. Now Missick’s bringing Misty to the screen – minus the bionic trimmings, at least for now – in *Luke Cage*, Netflix’s latest fix of street-view superheroics. It’s a breakthrough role for the Detroit-born actress, pushing her into the hot spotlight of the Marvel Universe. Has her world gone crazy? “No,” she laughs. “Obviously all of the press has been pretty intense and spectacular but when I’m not all dolled up I’m just regular old Simone!”

**Did you get a chance to dig into the comics when you got the part?**

“I didn’t. I wasn’t familiar with Misty Knight so immediately I thought, ‘Let me run out and buy some comic books and read everything that I can!’” And Jeph Loeb, the head of Marvel Television, was like, “Don’t go to any comic book stores! People will know that you’re Misty Knight and then it’ll leak on the internet!” So I just did a little bit of research online...

**Did you feel the weight of that comic book legacy? Fans can be very protective of these characters...**

“Yeah, they are. There were fans who had ideas of who they would’ve loved to see play this role – all actresses who I respect and admire and could definitely fit the look of Misty. But when I was announced no one said, ‘Who is this person? They should have chosen such and such!’ They were just so excited that Misty Knight was finally going to be seen on television. The fans have been so supportive and it takes away the pressure of feeling like they’re not already rooting for you. But then there is the added pressure of thinking, ‘Are you doing her justice?’ Artistically you have to put Simone’s ego aside and say, ‘Okay, I’m Misty Knight for these 12-14 hours that I’m on set, and these seven months that we’re shooting.’ That’s all I can focus on.

**Misty’s a more fantastical character in the comics, with the bionic arm and the martial arts skills. What did you make of all that stuff?**

“I think that is so outstanding to see – for them to have created this character in the ’70s when those were not the images that were portrayed of women of colour. We’ve seen Storm, who is an otherworldly superhero, but to see a woman who’s a street level hero, who was born a regular woman with both arms intact... For people to see the evolution of that character in this show is exciting, because it makes her more accessible and relatable.

**In one interview you said you had a ’70s soul. What did you mean by that?**

“It’s funny – my husband says I have a ’70s soul because he thinks I look like a woman from the ’70s! I’m shaped like women were back then. There are so many things portrayed in the media today where the women are all very dolled up and fake and plastic and everything sits up underneath their necks! The things we identify with are reality TV and things that just aren’t real. I just feel so much older in the sense that I look for music to have good instrumentation and the lyrics to mean something and women to be natural. I don’t frown upon people who change their bodies but I enjoy my body the way it is [laughs]!”

**The *Luke Cage* comics grew out of the Blaxploitation craze of the early ’70s. What’s your take on that genre?**

“Blaxploitation movies were a way to see black heroes, to see a black man walk into a room and kick ass and get the woman. Or a black woman, like Pam Grier, to walk into a room and kick ass and get the man, which you did not see anywhere else. And yes, there were different iterations of Blaxploitation that were buffoonish in some ways. But it gave those actors an opportunity and it also gave the audience the opportunity to see black people in a different light. It was the inspiration for the reason we’re here right now. I think all art is valid – it might not be everyone’s preference but it’s art, you take it, you leave it.

**Misty’s part of the *Daughters of the Dragon* team in the comics. Is that a spin-off you’d love to see?**

“Absolutely! I think any comic series brought to life with strong women would be an amazing opportunity. And the fans on Twitter and Instagram are so excited about that idea. That would be an amazing thing, if Netflix was able to bring it to the screen. ●

*Luke Cage is available on Netflix now.*

### Biodata

#### Occupation

→ Actress

#### From

→ Detroit, Michigan

#### Greatest Hits

→ *The Road To Sundance*, *A Taste Of Romance*, *Ray Donovan*, *Wayward Pines*

#### Random Fact

→ Law enforcement runs in Missick’s family: “I have an aunt who was a detective in Washington DC and an uncle who was a cop.”









# Strain

The Whoniverse is going back to school – but will spin-off series **CLASS** make the grade? Ian Berriman goes on set

• • • • •





**W**e've got spoilt, you know. Last October, when the *Doctor Who* Twitter account teased "HUGE #Doctor Who news", some were disappointed it turned out to be not a movie or missing episodes, but "just" another spin-off show. "Just" another eight episodes of telly. Well, if you are still in "Meh" mode about *Class*, it's time to slough off your indifference and start getting excited. There's some serious talent involved with this show. And you may be surprised how far into dark, "adult" territory this Young Adult drama is willing to tread.

Multi-million-selling author Patrick Ness is the man tasked with following up the spin-off successes of *Torchwood*, *The Sarah Jane Adventures* and, er, *K-9 And Company*.

"[Executive Producer] Brian Minchin approached me a couple of years ago to see if I'd be interested in writing for *Doctor Who*," Ness recalls. "At that point in time I'd done some script adaptations, so I said, 'It's fantastic to be asked, but I'm at the moment right now where I'd rather do something of my own.' And they said, 'Well we have this other thought... we're thinking of a spin-off set in Coal Hill. And I thought, 'Ooh, I know how I'd do that.'"

That's Coal Hill School, Shoreditch, of course – a location with huge significance in *Doctor Who*. In the very first story, "An Unearthly Child", the Doctor's granddaughter Susan was attending. The Seventh Doctor paid a visit in 1988's "Remembrance Of The Daleks". And from "The Day Of The Doctor" onwards it was a recurring setting after Clara became a teacher. Now Coal Hill's become an Academy – and a crossing-over point for alien threats, via tears in space and time.

"It's been the focus of *Doctor Who* since 1963," Ness explains. "Things have happened there, and that leaves a mark on a place. And so things come through..."

Chief among them: the Shadow Kin, creatures who ruthlessly wipe out planetary populations, down to the last survivor. One Coal Hill pupil is just such a survivor – as is a physics teacher. And their presence makes the school a target.

"Charlie's the last of a race called the Rhodia," Ness explains. "On their planet, the Rhodia were at war with the Quill. Miss Quill was their leading freedom fighter. The punishment the Rhodians have for their enemies is they put a creature in your head and link you to one particular Rhodia, so you're forced to be their protector. Because he was the prince and she was the leader of her people, it was decided that they'd be put together. Almost immediately after that, their planet was slaughtered by the Shadow Kin. They were the last two, trapped in the vault, as the Shadow Kin are pounding down the door, and they get saved by somebody, and placed in Coal Hill Academy, still stuck together. And the Shadow Kin come looking for them." →



April and Charlie are going to face bigger problems than double maths.



## Charlie Says

**Greg Austin** on playing an alien prince

**Tell us about your character.**

I play Charlie, an alien from the planet Rhodia. He's the prince of Rhodia, one of the final two survivors. The Doctor saves us and brings us to Earth. So I've just come to Earth and I'm trying to fit in.

**Does he have an aristocratic bearing?**

It's always there. He's trying to cover it up because he's gotta try and fit in with all these weird humans, who he thinks are very odd.

**How did you approach playing the role?**

When I got the sides for the audition, I didn't know he was an alien at that point. At first I thought he had Asperger's – that's how it came across. He takes everything at face value, and he's very socially awkward. So I latched onto that originally. I also watched *Ex Machina* in my research – I thought that was a good reference for Charlie, because he's so literal, a bit like a robot in a way. So I tried to incorporate that into his character a bit.

**How come he looks human?**

It's never explicitly stated, but as far as we've worked out the Doctor has changed us physically somehow. You will see some of us being aliens, but the prosthetics take ages!

Miss Quill: a teacher you'd want to have?

That "somebody" has questionable social skills, scary eyebrows and a nine-foot-high blue box. Yes, Peter Capaldi's Doctor appears in *Class*, to introduce the set-up. It makes sense, in terms of drawing in an audience. But Ness stresses that thereafter *Class* is very much its own show.

"I get tweeted at a lot," says Ness. "Can you bring this person back? Can you bring this monster back?" But as a viewer, I want to see new things. To me, that's a more honest challenge. We are part of the *Doctor Who* universe, and I love having a corner of this universe. But it's a big universe, and there's room for the new. I feel like... make something new that's great. The show really needs to stand on its own."

Ness's fellow exec Brian Minchin surely knows all there is to know about making *Who* spin-offs, having worked on both *Torchwood* and *SJA*. And he sings from the same hymn sheet.

"I think it's a misconception that the way to keep *Doctor Who* fans happy is to put lots of references to Tom Baker episodes in," Minchin says. "I think they're cleverer than that!"

That said, *Class* isn't above the odd Easter Egg, as we discover when we tour the set. A sign on the wall reveals this is the Barbara Wright Building – a nod to a First Doctor companion who taught at Coal Hill. The spacious, immaculate lobby also features a

large wooden Roll of Honour that includes familiar names like S Foreman...

## COOL SCHOOL

*SFX* wanders the locker-lined corridors (which have an American high school vibe) scanning the walls for clues. Could a lobby card for 1958 movie *The Brain Eaters* have any significance? A Stonewall "Some people are gay – get over it!" leaflet reminds us that Charlie has a boyfriend – a fact Ness felt compelled to tweet after June's mass shooting in Orlando. It's a measure of how far we've come in even the last decade that this barely warrants mention.

It all looks a damn sight snazzier than our old comprehensive – and more modern than the Coal Hill previously seen on screen. That's down to a directive Ness – an American who's lived here for 17 years – has been drilling into his crew.

"When the British talk about their school days, the phrase they *always* say is, 'A bit shit'," Ness notes. "So when we'd talk to the people we hired – the art director, the directors – we'd say, 'We're not doing "a bit shit". We're doing something else.' This Coal Hill is a place you'll want to go. We talked about how camera movements should work, that it can't look cheap. You have to tell the viewer, without them even knowing, that this is a classy production."





## “You have to tell the viewer, without them even knowing, that this is a classy production”

Another thing that marks out *Class* as a bit different is that it deals with consequences. The Doctor's way is to ceaselessly keep moving – on to the next planet, the next adventure. It's not the *Class* way.

“We haven't done a spin-off for so long because we had to wait for an idea that had its own voice, its own reason for being,” Minchin says. “That's what Patrick's done with *Class*. It does different things in terms of storytelling. In *Doctor Who* we set up and leave a world within 44 minutes. Here we've got eight episodes to explore these characters, their families, their lives. What it's like when the Doctor isn't there.”

Eight episodes, too, to explore the aftermath when tragedy strikes – as it does to one of the other pupils drawn into Charlie and Miss Quill's orbit. Let's just say that if Ofsted reports measure body count, Coal Hill will be getting a “requires improvement” rating...

“I wanted to have a show that follows the consequences of what happens after what usually happens on a teen sci-fi show,” Ness says. “[A character] has seen this terrible thing

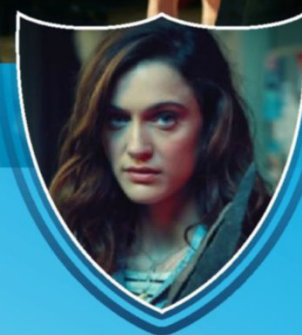
happen, so how does that affect them? Usually they just get over it and get on with the next episode. Here we focus on the feelings of loss. How do you live after the world has ended? I think that's a constant question of teen literature. It's not so much that the world feels like it's ending, it's that it *has ended* – so what happens next?”

All this is in accordance with Ness's philosophy on YA fiction, which he believes is what gives it a broader appeal – and will ensure that *Class* hooks older *Who* fans too.

“The best way has an un-stupid sincerity to it,” he explains. “It takes emotional pain seriously. It's not all teenagers buying *The Hunger Games* by the zillions. When I think of reasons for that, I think it's the treatment of love and loss and grief and not fitting in. If you do that correctly, it appeals to everybody, because we can all look at it and say, ‘Oh I was there – I know what that was like.’ So I think there's plenty there for an adult viewer.” ●

*Class* comes to BBC Three online on 22 October.

If only there was a Time Lord on hand...



## April's Powers

**Sophie Hopkins** on seeing through an alien's eyes

### What's April like?

In every bit of her being she wants to do good and help others. She's the sole carer for her mum, so she's strong and wise before her years. She's a bit of a mother hen. She tries to keep everyone together.

### We gather she has a special relationship with the chief alien threat.

An accident occurs which means that there's a blast, and April and the leader of the Shadow Kin end up sharing a heart – so I become half Shadow Kin. It's intense! She's so pure, and to have pure evil nestling inside her... It takes over at certain points. It's really beautiful, the journey that she takes and the growth within the character, dealing with having a badass alien being part of her.

### What would you say to any Who fans nervous about another spin-off?

*Class* is something fresh, and it's completely not what any of us expected. Patrick's writing is very funny and very true, and there's something really honest and beautiful about the way the characters are portrayed. So have trust in the *Doctor Who* family that we're gonna do them proud and they're gonna love it.



# HEROES&INSPIRATIONS

## PETER DAVISON

The Fifth Doctor talks mime, crime, music and politics with Nick Setchfield. “No one wants to hear an actor sing...”

Something of the Doctor clings to Peter Davison. Perhaps it's the straw panama he's wearing as he enters a Richmond pub to meet *SFX*. The hair is silver now, the jawline flecked with stubble, but you can still catch the boyish Time Lord who kept evil at bay with the combined power of cricket, decency and celery. When he wryly flashes his recently acquired bus pass it feels like a glitch in the space-time vortex.

At 65 he's just written about his life – “Originally I was going to call it *Peter Davison The Autobiography Vol 3: The Doctor Who Years*,” he grins – and he's clearly in a reflective mood. What better time to share his heroes and inspirations?

“As you get older, your life fragments,” he tells *SFX*. “You remember all these things but you can't really remember the order they happened in...”

We'd expect nothing less from a Time Lord.



The celery under threat in *Who* story “Arc Of Infinity”.

### SPENCER TRACY

➤ I grew up in the early days of BBC Two, and all day long they used to run black and white films. I used to love the old Hollywood stars, people like Spencer Tracy and James Stewart, because it seemed to me that they just made everything theirs. You never questioned that Spencer Tracy was short and a bit sort of square looking. He was just brilliant. I admired that ability he had: he didn't appear to be doing anything but you had an eye into him. You always understood where he was coming from.

### ROBERT HARDY

➤ When I did *All Creatures Great And Small* I used to listen to Robert Hardy, talking so wonderfully about timing and working with all these amazing people like Olivier, and I just felt so hopelessly inadequate. He was fantastic to me. He really was one of my biggest supporters and wanted the part of Tristan to be bigger. So that in itself made me feel better. He used to drive himself nuts. He never did the same thing twice. It was almost pot luck what you got. You might get a brilliant take from him or you might get something that wasn't as good as anything he'd done in rehearsal. And he knew that, so he'd get really cross with himself, if he felt he'd done too much. Whether it was big or small, whether he'd shout a line or whisper it to me, it was always brilliant. He was probably my biggest influence in terms of style, although I didn't try to copy him. He's totally unique. ➔

“Robert Hardy was probably my biggest influence in terms of style. He's unique”



Spencer Tracy was nominated for a record nine Best Actor Oscars.



A fine ensemble (including dog) in *All Creatures Great And Small*.

REX (3), BBC







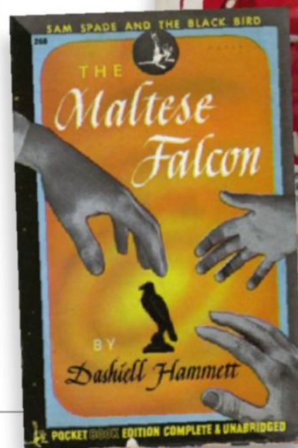
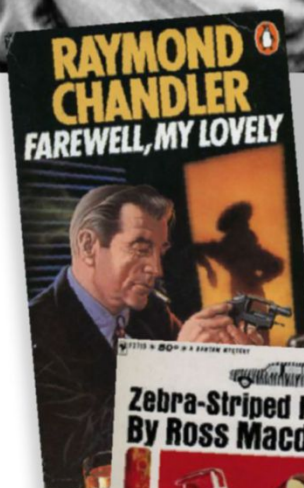


Procol Harum were named after a Burmese cat.

## PROCOL HARUM

My sister introduced me to pop music. But she was a bit tame – she was into Elvis Presley and Cliff Richard and people like that. I really got into it, I suppose, with flower power. That's when I really switched on to it. I was very much a weekend hippy. I had the airforce coat and the kaftan and the beads. And I had these awful, pathetic sideburns, like an M1 down my chin. And Procol Harum were my band. I remember listening to "A Whiter Shade Of Pale" and thinking, "This is the greatest thing I've ever heard in my life!" I used to write songs – I'd learned to play the guitar, and so I would try to emulate Procol Harum and the San Francisco groups. I recorded a couple of things, but it was clear to me that I was not cut out to be a musician in the gigging sense. I was aware that there's a huge problem – no one wants to hear an actor sing, really. It's very dodgy mixing acting and singing. Dennis Waterman syndrome clicks in immediately. You just think, give me a break. No one's

“If there was an ego, it was Jon Pertwee, but I was quite happy to defer to him”



going to go out and buy a single or a song because I'd written it, unless it was so damn good that it overcame that. It's an impediment. You might get some kind of deal because you're known but no one will buy the record because you're known!

## AMERICAN CRIME FICTION

I never read at all at school. I just didn't read. Giving me a book to read was like giving me an excuse to put it down. But then when I became an actor for some reason I started reading everything I could get my hands on, whether it was English classic novels or American crime fiction. I got into Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, and then Ross Macdonald and Ed McBain. I like people like Michael Connelly now. I don't know what it is about American crime fiction – it started off with this love of the hardboiled detective, which is defined by Hammett and Chandler. I just like them. They're easy to read but in their own way they're quite literary. And also the fact they're cool in the way I could never be [laughs]! These characters walk into these very dodgy situations and they've got all the smart remarks.

## ANDREW DAVIES

He wrote *A Very Peculiar Practice*. We didn't need to change a single syllable or piece of punctuation. I realised when I read him that I'd

REX (3), BBC





One of the many, many faces of David Bowie.

all up, because he believed absolutely in his principles. I don't think I can be like him. I think I'm too self-interested. Some of the interviews he gave towards the end of his life were just so moving. He held on, he was principled, right to the end. I think you have to be.

## PATRICK TROUGHTON

❖ I started watching *Doctor Who* with William Hartnell. And I loved him as the Doctor. I knew he was leaving, and rather than cancel the series they announced that this other actor was taking over, who I didn't know at all. I remember sitting down to watch that first Patrick Troughton episode with such bias that I was going to hate him, that I was going to hate the programme – and by the end of it I just remember thinking, “This is fantastic, he's just amazing.” He seemed to capture everything that was required. He had this vulnerability, which I tried to bring back into the programme, but he also had a slightly dangerous quality to him, which I don't think I did manage to bring back. I think I was just too young or inadequate to do it. So the contrary elements I loved. He was slightly enigmatic – there was a dangerous quality to him. Not to put William Hartnell down at all, but Patrick

Troughton created something that was greater than what was there before. I got to know him later – he was just so ordinary, in a way. The first conversation I had with him was about his vegetable patch, which seemed to be extraordinary even when I was having the conversation. It must have been when we were doing *All Creatures Great And Small*. I just remember thinking, “I can't believe I'm talking to Patrick Troughton about his vegetable patch...” Was it surreal for me to act alongside him in “The Five Doctors”? Not as much as I thought it would be. [Producer] John Nathan-Turner kept me apart from the others because he was afraid there would be too many egos flying around the set. What he probably meant was that I would be swamped by the combined forces of Troughton and Pertwee... I regret that we didn't meet up until so late on in that story. It's just that one scene. If there was an ego, it was Pertwee, but I was quite happy to defer to him – I didn't have any problem with that at all. You really felt that he thought [Pertwee impression] “I'm the Doctor!” Patrick Troughton kind of stole the show by not being like that! ●

*Is There Life Outside The Box?: An Actor Despairs* by Peter Davison is out now from John Blake Publishing.



Patrick Troughton brought new dimensions to the Doctor's character.

never really done a really good script. I mean a really good script. We were doing this scene – I think it was with Rose Marie [Barbara Flynn] – and it was one of those speeches that ended with three dots. So I did this line and David Tucker, the director, stopped me afterwards and said, “That sentence you did today. It's got three dots at the end. I think you're only playing two...” That was the level at which we approached the script.

## DAVID BOWIE

❖ He was fantastic. I still think *Hunky Dory* is one of the great albums of all time. He was in a different class. Whatever he was doing, whether it was the glam stuff or the stuff that came later, he was just brilliant. I saw Bowie on the bill with Tyrannosaurus Rex at the Royal Festival Hall [in 1968]. He didn't sing – he was doing mime! It was the weirdest thing. It was about Vietnam or something. I don't know what the hell it was. I just remember thinking, “Who is this guy?!”

## TONY BENN

❖ If you listened to Tony Benn, if you read his diaries – and the diaries are amazing – he never puts a foot wrong. This is a man who came from a very privileged background. He gave it



Labour politician Tony Benn on the campaign trail.



LUKE, YODA AND R2-D2 ON BOG PLANET THUMBNAIL SKETCH

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

McQuarrie's vision of Dagobah was inspired by the towering swamp trees of the Florida Everglades.



Visionary artist Ralph McQuarrie defined the look of the *Star Wars* universe, creating pictures that helped hurl the saga out of George Lucas's head and on to the big screen. A new two-volume set collects his complete work on the original trilogy and beyond, unearthing rare and unpublished glimpses of a galaxy far, far away...



X-WING ATTACKING DEATH STAR PRELIMINARY ILLUSTRATION

RETURN OF THE JEDI

George Lucas's early story outline for *Jedi* included two under-construction Imperial space stations.

# FORCE



WOOKIEES WITH BEASTS CONCEPT SKETCH

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Lucas toyed with taking us to the Wookiee homeworld of Kashyyyk as early as *Episode V*.



HAD ABBADON PYRAMIDS PRODUCTION ILLUSTRATION RETURN OF THE JEDI

In early drafts of *Jedi* Had Abbadon was the Imperial stronghold, a planet completely covered by a huge city.



SNOWTROOPER COMMANDER HELMET CONCEPT SKETCH

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Originally conceived as Imperial military issue, this helmet ultimately evolved into Boba Fett's iconic look.





# VISIONS



**STAR DESTROYER BRIDGE** PRODUCTION ILLUSTRATION **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**

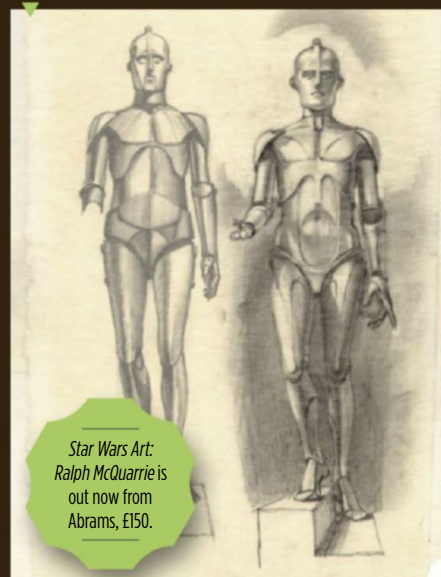
It was McQuarrie's idea to incorporate these vast windows – "You could see the Millennium Falcon go roaring by."

**LUKE IN RANCOR PIT** PRODUCTION ILLUSTRATION  
**RETURN OF THE JEDI**

McQuarrie's depiction of the Rancor took its cue from a maquette created by ILM's creature department.

**C-3PO** CONCEPT SKETCH **STAR WARS**

An early vision of the protocol droid, showing the influence of the Maria robot from 1927's *Metropolis*.







New supernatural  
drama **HIM**  
unleashes the power  
of the mind.  
Stephen Kelly meets  
its creator

ABOUT A

BOY



**P**ick the bones of Stephen King's *Carrie* and it's a story about burgeoning womanhood; about puberty, menstruation, sexuality. ITV's new "domestic horror", *HIM*, is not as gruesome as *Carrie* – it is, after all, on ITV – but screenwriter Paula Milne is trying to achieve something similar: to take King's exploration of female adolescence and flip it in the direction of men.

"What it is, really, is a metaphor for teenage boys' rage," she tells *SFX*. "I have three sons and a daughter and I've been married twice, and divorced twice. I wanted to do something that showed how difficult life can be for a child going through divorce. Especially young men, who find it difficult to articulate emotions. And when families break up, I think they're placed at a vulnerable position at that time, in trying to find out who they are, and how they fit into new dynamics. Like *Carrie*, I wanted to use this power he has as a metaphor for that, and whether or not he could control it, and whether it would all end in tragedy."

That power is some form of telekinesis, an ability which 17-year-old HIM (played by newcomer Ffion Whitehead) has inherited from his grandfather, and is struggling to suppress ever since the divorce of his parents, played by Katherine Kelly and James Murray. Now both remarried with new families, he finds himself caught between their two homes – and an enemy to his parents' new, respective partners. Cue teenage angst, cue "acting out", cue knives floating above stepfathers' heads...

## BASED ON LIFE

"HIM was very much based on my youngest son," says Milne, "and the sort of teenage turbulence that he hit [during my divorce]. But at the same time, Steven November, who is the commissioner at ITV, asked me, 'Why is he called HIM? He never has a name'. And I said, 'Because he's all our sons'. People have to watch and be like, 'I know that kid'."

Domestic drama comes naturally for Milne, who has built her career on straight, often

political shows like 2012's *White Heat*, and 2013's *The Politician's Husband*; both of which aired on BBC Two. Yet to blend that kind of grounded drama with the supernatural was a whole new challenge for her.

"I think [supernatural] things carry more impact if they're set against an ordinary background – the kind of mundanity of suburbia, if you like. But I did research [the supernatural elements], because the genre has its own appeal to an audience so you want them to buy into that.

"The research itself was very interesting," she adds, "because to make it credible you have to park your disbelief and your scepticism and approach it as if it were true... People do want it to be true in some ways. People who believe in it and conduct exorcisms and so forth have told me that pubescence is a ripe and optimum time if [telekinesis] is going to occur. I think it's no coincidence that the horror genre often revolves around young people in some stage of alienation. That, to me, is very much the stripped down engine of what the genre is."

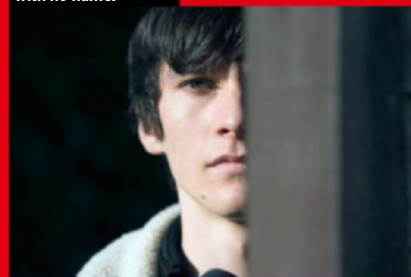
Although far from the days of *The Prisoner*, *The Avengers* and even – yes – *Primeval*, *HIM* does represent something of a shift in ITV's attitude towards sci-fi, fantasy and horror; with the past few years having seen such supernatural stabs as *Midwinter Of The Spirit*, *The Oaks*, *Afterlife* and, of course, last year's doomed *Jekyll And Hyde*. Even so, ITV is still a mainstream channel, with an arguably broader tone than, say, the BBC or Channel 4. Was there a limit to how far she could push the horror?

"Well, I'd already processed what I wanted to do – setting it in suburbia, extended families, divorce and such. So to some extent, wherever I'd taken it, that was going to be a component in it. And I'm sure that suited them! It wasn't going to be so completely 'far out' that they →



HIM has *Carrie*-like powers – but will he use them for good or evil?

Ffion Whitehead takes on the role of the boy with no name.



“He’s like all our sons. People have to watch it and be like, ‘I know that kid’”







Former *Coronation Street* star Katherine Kelly plays HIM's mum Hannah.

“It was fun to show how some of the scariest things come out of the ordinary”



Simona Brown is stepsister Faith, who HIM begins to feel attracted to.

would lose their mainstream audience. But at the same time, having said that, it was quite brave to introduce something quite different, in that they hadn't done anything quite like that before. It's not quite creeping floorboards and doors opening when no one's there. It's rooted around one specific power.”

Does she feel that ITV commissioning *HIM* says something about how mainstream the supernatural has become?

“I would say so. Television is very dictated by genre. And the sort of safety net of genre has traditionally been crime shows, thrillers, hospital dramas and so forth. And perhaps horror has been neglected, because special effects have mainly taken it over. I think two things have kind of happened together. The first is, I think, seeing popularity in contemporary culture, like *The Blair Witch Project* and *Twilight*. Seeing how they reach and impact on an audience has kind of spilled more over into TV.

“The second thing is because the digital stuff is now much more affordable. We did a lot of effects on camera but we did a lot in post-production. And before that, it would've been horrendously expensive. It's much more doable than it used to be. I remember taking my kid on the set of *Doctor Who* once and he burst into tears because it was all polystyrene...”

As you can imagine, dramas like *The Politician's Husband* don't feature a lot of supernatural special effects. How did Milne find writing HIM's powers?

“What was fun was to show how some of the scariest things are those that come out of the ordinary. There's one scene where the scary thing is just a bag of tools on a ladder, and there's a blade sticking out, and [HIM] is realising you could actually slice someone's skull with that. He just about manages to control [the urge to], but it's important to show that he's capable of that.”

## TEENAGE TRIALS

Told over three episodes, *HIM* will push its titular teenager to the limit. It will tear him between broken homes; it will make him the bane of hostile step-parents, the unwanted baggage of his actual parents; it will confuse him with feelings for a stepsister he's barely met; it will thrust upon him generations of immense, supernatural power – and expect him to control it. Surely this won't end well?

“I had to pile stuff on him,” says Milne, “so he had nowhere to go. People who are boxed into a corner have a habit of coming out fighting. And from that, the central thrust of the story is, ‘Will he control it?’ And because of what the audience understands and perceives the horror genre to be, this will eventually have to become a matter of life and death – whether he uses his power in terms of violence or not. It builds and builds to that – the frustrations and emotions that he cannot control.” ●

*HIM is on ITV from October (date TBC).*



# ATTACK OF THE LEDERHOSEN ZOMBIES

THE HILLS  
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coolest and most original  
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'A thigh slapping Zomi-Com  
that takes the piste'  
HOUSE OF FREUDSTEIN

'Zombie comedy of the year'  
TERRORWEEKEND

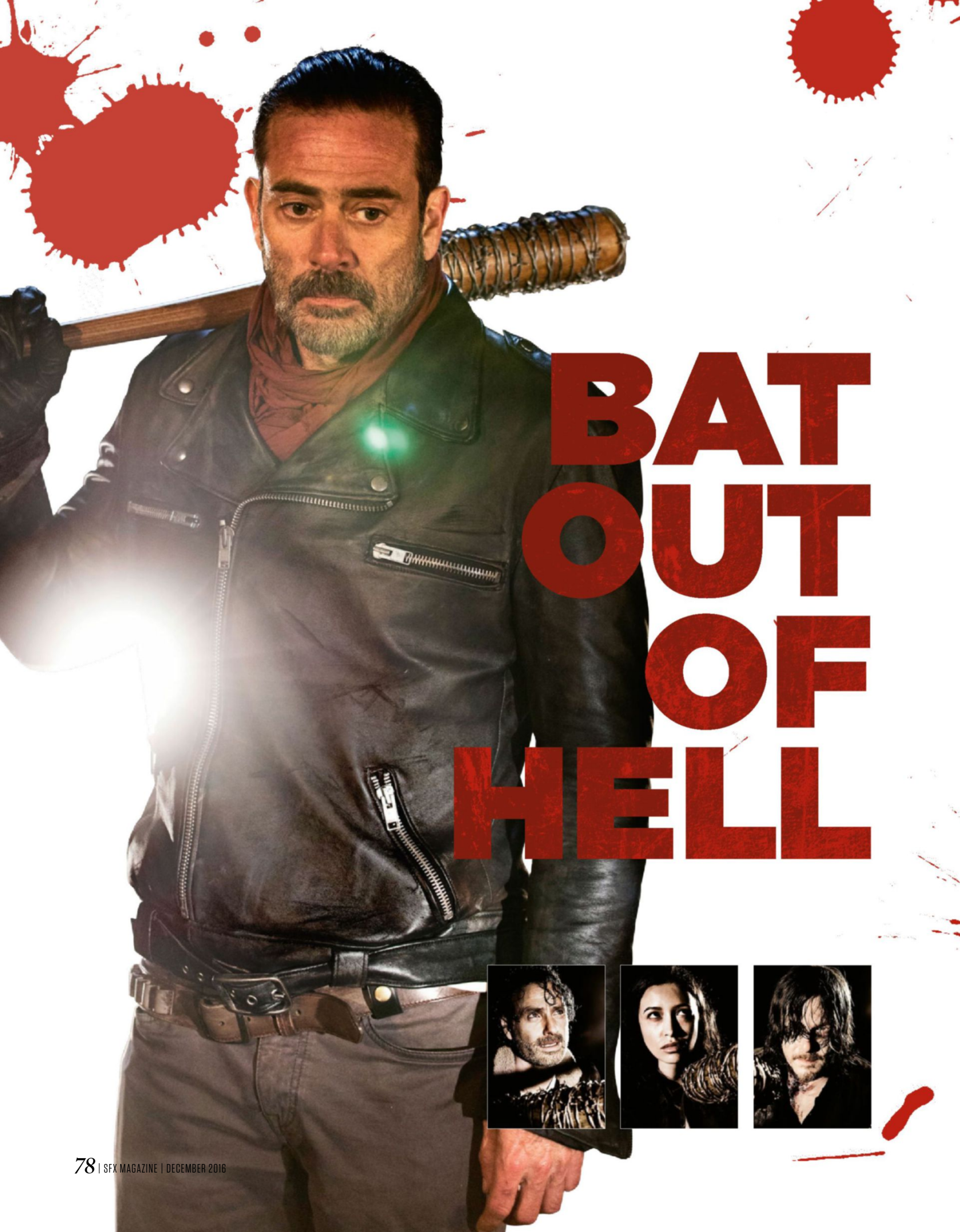
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[SCREENBOUND]





# BAT OUT OF HELL





W

**THE WALKING DEAD'S**  
latest cliffhanger presented the  
biggest murder mystery in TV  
history. Joseph McCabe  
investigates season seven

ielding the kind of security that was once the sole province of the world's superpowers, *The Walking Dead* has long been the most tight-lipped production on television. Secrecy is paramount on the show's Georgia set – through the ranks of both cast and crew – and in its Hollywood writers' room. Journalists routinely sign one-million-dollar embargoes before they can interview its stars, and even then are told nothing that could constitute or even lead to speculation about a spoiler. And all of this was *before* the zombie apocalypse drama aired its latest cliffhanger.

Capping its sixth season in gruesome, gruelling uncertainty, for both its characters and audience, *The Walking Dead's* most recent episode saw its hero Rick Grimes and his friends and family brought to their knees, literally, before the most sadistic antagonist to appear yet on the show: Jeffrey Dean Morgan's baseball-bat-wielding Negan. After chanting "Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Moe" the leader of the Saviors pointed his beloved "Lucille" at one of our heroes, and beat them to death...→





## BUT WHICH ONE?

It's a question that's haunted viewers ever since, drawing maddening though predictable silence from a team well used to wearing poker faces. And it's the biggest question on *SFX*'s mind as we sit down to chat with executive producer Gale Anne Hurd to discuss the upcoming season. Today Hurd has brought a surprise guest to our interview – actor Michael Cudlitz, best known to *Dead* fans as the great red-mustachioed giant Abraham Ford.

Is Cudlitz, like his character, playing the role of muscle? Is his presence intended to make *SFX* think twice before probing too deeply into the mystery? Or is Abraham himself the doomed survivor and is Cudlitz here for what will ultimately be revealed as a farewell? Then again, could Abraham's love interest Sasha have felt the sting of Lucille?!

Cudlitz chuckles at our uncertainty. "Were you around when JR got shot?" he laughs, recalling the 1980 *Dallas* episode from which all TV cliffhangers since have sprung.

"The difference," says Hurd, "is that back



They ain't getting any prettier...

## MAGGIE MAY...

...LAUREN COHAN'S NOT ALLOWED TO SAY



**How are you finding keeping the Negan cliffhanger a secret?**

I've never known people be so inventive! In a supermarket, in an airport, anywhere you go people are trying to glean some clue about

what may have transpired. It's obviously a tribute that people are this mad sometimes about not knowing!

**It must be a very intense show to film. Is it hard to switch off from it?**

It's one of those weird things where you almost enjoy the melancholy because you just feel more in touch. I think it does benefit us to be around each other – definitely a lot of us have felt that after [the season six finale] we are closer. It's just one of those unspoken things – there's such an understanding of the emotions we've been through together in the same space. It's really valuable to me.

**You've been on the show since season two. What's it been like seeing it grow into the monster hit it is now?**

We're really lucky on this show to be surrounded by such grounded people. I think that type of success could affect the show adversely and it doesn't in our case. Andy Lincoln is just our leader and his attitude, his dedication is absolutely infectious for all of us, and I think that is for me an enormous part of the success of the show. **Richard Edwards**

then there was no social media. It wasn't this spontaneous community... But the truth is it's business as usual for us, in the sense that we strive very hard to protect every revelation on the show. And this is no different. It's just that the spotlight is brighter."

That brightness is all the more jarring for the dark figure at its heart. But Cudlitz, an avid reader of the *Walking Dead* comic, says that the Negan fans see in season seven will live up to their expectations, even after the novelty of his appearance in the finale's final scene ends.

"He is terrific," says the actor of his castmate Jeffrey Dean Morgan. "He is larger than life in every way that graphic novel Negan is. The fans will be very satisfied. You have a character who the fans of the graphic novel love, and on television you have somebody who's making an entrance, who's going to do some potentially not nice things to characters that everyone already loves, and then hopefully transition into a character that people really do fall in love with... It's a task. But already you see people responding to Jeffrey Dean in such a positive way that we're halfway there. They already love to hate him. And that's the goal."

"Characters like this," he adds, "you want them to be hated. But you don't want a character that people hate so much they want off the show. That's an interesting balance. I think it's a job that we have been successful at and will continue to be successful at."

No matter whose life Negan ends, fans can take some comfort in the fact that *The Walking Dead* now has more regular characters on TV than any show this side of *Game Of*

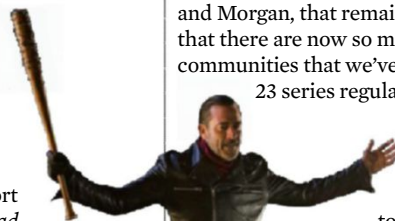


Negan doesn't just use a baseball bat.

*Thrones*. In addition to Negan, the Savivors, and Rick's group, season seven will include Carol and Morgan and the newfound Kingdom, Denise and Heath back in Alexandria, and Gregory and Jesus at the Hilltop Colony, for a total of what Cudlitz calls "four completely separate, fully introduced worlds".

"That's what's great about the show," says Hurd. "We are able to follow characters who are on a separate journey. In the case of Carol and Morgan, that remains true. And the fact that there are now so many different communities that we've introduced. We have 23 series regulars. So there's a lot to juggle, but also a lot to explore and expand upon. We have that opportunity to do so in season seven."

And the amazing thing – it's a real tribute to the writers on the show







So have you put that bet down at Ladbrokes?

– is how much we get to know each of these 20 plus regulars during the course of a 16-episode season.”

Among this season’s new characters is yet another comic-book favourite. The “King” of the Kingdom, Ezekiel, played by Khary Payton.

“We had extensive auditions for the role,” explains Hurd, “as we do for all of the characters. And Khary Payton really delivered. It’s interesting, because he’s most known as a voice actor bringing animated characters to life; and it was important to him to be able to play King Ezekiel. We really looked at who the right actor was. Not necessarily that his age was the exact same age as the character in the comic books. But he really brings all of those qualities that people loved in the character in the comic book to life on the show.”

## “It’s a game-changer for the characters and the audience”

As for Cudlitz’s own character, the actor explains how Abraham’s life has changed since he fell for Sonequa Martin-Green’s Sasha...

“This is the first time in a very long time – maybe ever – that Abraham sees a future. I think he’s actually, possibly for the first time in his life, truly fallen in love. It’s not a relationship of convenience. It’s not something that he got into... In the graphic novel he talks

about how he was never really a good husband. So I’ve always taken it that when he was actually in the process of falling in love with Sasha, that this was something new to him. That he had never experienced before. And it was profoundly changing his life. It took the apocalypse for him to find love and to find that there was an actual meaning in life. He’s not necessarily a young guy, yet he’s still considering and thinking about starting a new life with someone and having children. He’s experiencing something he’s never experienced before. It’s life, it’s hope, and it comes out of this amazingly horrific situation.

“So right now, in the group, I think that he’s looking for that moment. Looking for a way out. Can anything be done? It’s a pretty hopeless moment that we’re left with at the end of season six. I think everyone in the group is looking for that moment where we can come together and change the situation. And that’s where we’re left.”

Hurd, however, gives us little hope that the band of survivors will find a way out of their present situation soon. Her words, in fact, echo Negan’s declaration that their lives have changed, and that he is now their master.

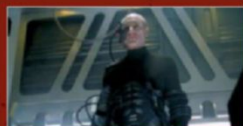
“Obviously we’re going to start off in a very dark place,” says the producer. “And Negan is such a game-changer character. In the past we’ve seen the Rick who wanted to be Rick the farmer, we’ve seen the Ricktatorship, we’ve seen all of the different variations of Rick’s world and how he interacts with the people in it. Now we’re gonna see Negan’s world, which they’re living in. That’s the game-changer.

“Not only for the characters on the show,” warns Hurd, “but for the audience who will be experiencing season seven through those characters.”

*The Walking Dead is on Fox from 24 October.*

## TO BE CONTINUED

THE FIVE GREATEST SEASON FINALE CLIFFHANGERS IN SCI-FI TV HISTORY



### Star Trek: The Next Generation

Trek’s most thrilling moment came in “The Best Of Both Worlds, Part One” in which Picard is captured by the Borg and turned into “Locutus”, which prompts a desperate Riker to open fire on his captain.



### Blake's 7

While series three of the beloved BBC space opera saw its titular rebel leader Roj Blake go missing, its finale (“Terminal”) gave an even bigger shock when the real star of the show, the spacecraft Liberator, was blown to smithereens.



### Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Season five ends with the Chosen One sacrificing her life, but the show’s season two finale, “Becoming (Part 2)”, makes Buffy pay an even more haunting price when she slays her great love, Angel, and sends his soul to hell.



### Twin Peaks

In the tradition of “Who shot JR?” from the previous decade, David Lynch ended the first season of his groundbreaking surrealistic TV show with “The Last Evening”, in which Kyle MacLachlan’s Agent Cooper also gets a bellyful of lead.



### The X-Files

The paranormal favourite’s most anxiety-inducing cliffhanger occurred in its second season finale (“Anasazi”). After Mulder’s investigations result in the murder of his father, the Smoking Man tries to snuff him out in a burning box car.



Brought



To Book

# CHRIS BECKETT

The Brit author tells us about achieving literary success later in life...

Words by Jonathan Wright // Photography by Joby Sessions

**M**ost people's professional lives wind down when they hit 60. Not in the case of Chris Beckett, who recently became a sexagenarian. As his latest novel, *Daughter Of Eden*, is published, his writing career, painstakingly built through years when he would have at most a couple of short stories a year in print, is taking off in earnest. "I feel very privileged," he says.

But perhaps it's we readers who should cast ourselves as the fortunate ones because Beckett's fiction is really rather special, social SF that's rich and complex. Take the new novel. It's the unsettling conclusion to a trilogy that began with Arthur C Clarke Award winner *Dark Eden* (2012), which explored how a strange and warped society develops after a couple are stranded on a planet far from home.

"*Dark Eden* was all about how people use the past to make stories that help them make sense of the present, so I thought it would be fun to jump ahead a couple of centuries to when the events in *Dark Eden* themselves had become the story, and see what happens," says Beckett, speaking of both *Daughter Of Eden* and its predecessor, *Mother Of Eden*. In part, says Beckett, he was thinking here about the divide between Sunni and Shia Islam. This dates back to events in the aftermath of the death of Muhammad, yet different interpretations of what happened echo down the centuries.

## DIFFICULT TIMES

At the novel's centre lies Angie Redlantern. Born with "what we'd call a cleft palate and a hair lip", she's a troubled woman living in troubled times, when tension on the ironically named Eden is about to explode. But this isn't a book about religious conflict per se, it's a book about how worldviews, including those "that are simply not viable any longer, that simply don't make sense" can collide.

As we've seen recently with the EU referendum, such collisions can leave even people from the same communities staring at each other in mutual miscomprehension. "We form these tribes and then we find it very difficult to think outside the box of our particular tribe or group," says Beckett. "It's comforting to think of these people as bad or misguided, rather than just people with a different view."

Intriguingly, you can read Beckett's career as leaving him far better placed than most to avoid falling into this trap. Before becoming a full-time writer, he was a social worker, working primarily with families. "You're dealing with unhappy, struggling and dysfunctional families," he says. "Also, you're very aware that you're dealing with people on the margins of society, people who have got the worst deal."

Social work has a reputation, at least in Britain's right-wing press, as the preserve of woolly liberals who couldn't get by in the "real" world. The reality, says Beckett, is that things don't get much more real than intervening in troubled lives. "It's a very distressing thing to be involved in," he says. "The family is a very sacred thing in our minds. You don't break families up, but equally you don't let kids suffer in families, so you're in a no-win situation."

Latterly, Beckett moved over to become a social work lecturer, and still teaches from time to time ("When you're a writer, it's quite nice occasionally to do something that involves other people"), but look for evidence of his former profession in his writing and it's there in abundance. Most obviously, *Marcher* (2009) was "set in a world where benefit claimants basically live apart from the rest of the community". It was a book inspired, if that's the right word, by what he saw around him in Cambridge.

"Cambridge is an affluent city," he says. "But I worked as a social worker in Cambridge, around the margins. Out of sight of most people who come to Cambridge as tourists or professionals, there are little pockets of real poverty and misery and desperation."

## LIFE LESSONS

When SFX suggests that Beckett is, if not a better writer, than at least a different one for having gone through this parallel professional career, he doesn't disagree. "When I was young, I didn't know enough about life [to write]," he says, "it was difficult to write." The novel he finished at the age of 19, you'd guess, is never going to see the light of day.

Other work, however, is imminent. Having for years written SF short stories, Beckett says these seem to have dried up. But he clearly likes the form because he's written a non-genre collection, *Spring Tide*. It's something of a gamble, he concedes, but adds: "Most sci-fi readers read other stuff, it's the other way round that's the problem..."

As for his next novel, it's a tale of the USA set a century from now. In the south-west, there's drought. On the east coast, hurricanes blow. The country has a huge problem with internal migration. He's finding it tough to write: Eden he can make up, Britain he knows, the near-future US in its way is more exotic than both – especially considering the current race for the White House. "The invention in my book is piling in comparison with what's happening," he laughs. "I kind of think, 'Come on Donald Trump, cut me a break here...'" ●

*Daughter Of Eden* is out now from Atlantic Books.

## Biodata

### Occupation

→ Novelist

### Born

→ 28 December 1955

### From

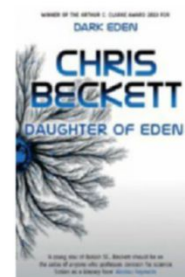
→ Cambridge

### Greatest Hits

→ *The Turing Test* (2008) won the Edge Hill Short Story Prize, a key moment in Beckett turning professional as a writer. *Dark Eden* took the Clarke.

### Random Fact

→ Beckett's first published short story was *A Matter Of Survival*, which appeared in 1990 in *Interzone*. Like we say, he's been at this a while.





“WHEN I  
WAS YOUNG  
I DIDN’T  
KNOW  
ENOUGH  
TO WRITE”





# KEEPING IT UNREAL

THE REVOLUTION WILL BE  
MECHANISED... THE SYNTHS GO  
GLOBAL IN **HUMANS** SEASON TWO,  
AS STEPHEN KELLY DISCOVERS



# THESIS



**It was in South Korea, earlier this year,** that the machines finally won. There was no blood, however. No violence. No death. It was just an artificial intelligence program that had achieved the impossible: it beat a man at a board game.

A bit of context here: Go is not just any old board game. It's an abstract war simulation, founded in China nearly 3,000 years ago. Its rules are simple but its possibilities are seemingly endless, with there being more legal moves on a board of Go than there are atoms in the visible universe. It's a game of such depth and nuance that no AI could ever hope to best it – until March, when AlphaGo, developed by Google's DeepMind department, consecutively beat the best Go player in the world, Lee Sedol. At one point it played a move so stunning that Sedol stood up and left the room. Afterwards, a commentator wrote that watching the game made him “physically unwell”.

Sam Vincent and Jonathan Brackley, co-writers of Channel 4 hit *Humans*, have a special interest in that story. For one, they have become friends with Demis Hassabis, the CEO of DeepMind. And two, as Vincent says, “The thing about AlphaGo is that it became good at Go simply by playing itself. Not by crunching every single possible move but by having something approaching intuition like a human. It serves as a reminder that although our show is still a bit far-fetched, it's not as far away as you think...”

## UNCERTAIN FUTURE

And that, ultimately, is what was so powerful about *Humans*, the sci-fi drama in which subservient robots – “synths” – have become the must-have gadget of mankind. Its debut series, adapted from Swedish show *Real Humans*, tapped into a universal anxiety about our reliance on technology, and what it means for our future. How will artificial intelligence affect jobs? How will it affect family? How will it affect relationships, sex and love? How will it affect our place in society, in innovation and art? What happens when AI becomes

self-aware – what then? Across eight episodes, *Humans* was able to ask all these questions – and now, with series two, it's able to ask more.

“Every year, as AI becomes more and more advanced, it understands us better and we understand it less,” says Vincent. “That has caused unease, and I think people are finally ready to engage with that unease.” Spread across several storylines, series one of *Humans* was – by and large – an ensemble drama. Yet its driving force was Anita, a



“We say, ‘Here’s something wonderful but also scary’”

synth played by Gemma Chan, property of the Hawkins family, headed by lawyer Laura (Katherine Parkinson) and husband Joe (Tom Goodman-Hill). Creepy and beautiful, something was not quite right about Anita. She laughed at jokes wrong; she stood behind people eerily; she was a conscious synth called Mia, trapped in the shell of a machine. There were a whole group of conscious synths in fact, created by a genius called David Elster, who had cracked the code of consciousness. They are: the naive Max (Ivanno Jeremiah); the “Mona Lisa” of synths Fred (Sope Dirisu); Karen (Ruth Bradley), created to replace Elster's late wife; Elster's part-synth son Leo (Colin Morgan); and the violent and resentful Niska, played by Emily Berrington.

It's the latter, of course, that you need to watch out for in series two. For the last time we saw Niska she had stolen a copy of the consciousness programme, and looked like she was going to unleash it upon the world. Are we set for a full-on synth revolution? Vincent and Brackley, who are speaking to *SFX* over the phone, go quiet – they have been told to be careful about spoilers.

“Well,” laughs Vincent, “she's lit the prospect but it's a relatively slow-burning process.”

“It's a much more of a personal story for Niska,” chips in Brackley.

Okay, but is it fair to say that, in series two, the world will start to wake up to the idea of conscious synths?

“Yes,” says Vincent. “The world is certainly going to have to start waking up to that.” He pauses. “Yes.”

That “yes” is a soft but final finish, like the fall of a curtain. But let's press on: theoretically, how does he think the world would react to such a scenario?

“I think that there's absolutely no doubt that a scenario like that would be widely feared,” he says, cautiously. “It would be chaotic – especially as we're dependent on the unpaid labour of these hundreds of millions of machines. If they were to change their nature in some way, it would be an extremely traumatic process for the world and one that many people would be extremely keen to avoid...”

“But I'm speaking theoretically, of course.”

## MORE EXPANSIVE

Set a few months after the events of series one, series two picks up in a world that's more reliant on synths than ever – and in a show that's “bigger, wider, broader – a more global story”.

This is a nod towards the show's newest and most exciting cast member, Carrie-Anne Moss, best known as Trinity from *The Matrix*. Her role as Dr Athena Morrow, the world's pre-eminent AI expert, will expand the story to California, where she's hired by a young Silicon Valley billionaire, played by Marshall Allman.

“His name is Milo Khoury,” explains Vincent. “He's one of those people who are driven by an ambition to transform the world. He has an idea and hires Dr Morrow to help him with it; but she has a tragic secret, and something very different in mind from what he's hired her to do. They are at the centre of the big mystery which propels the show.”

Series two is not just going wider in scale, however; it will also open up its ensemble.

“Series one had that intense focus in the Hawkins house,” says Brackley, “but that domestic psycho drama has opened out into something broader and characters who were slightly secondary then now have their own stories and are standing on their own two feet.”





Max and Leo  
need a glazier.



Joe and Laura believe  
in getting five-a-day.

The specifics of certain characters are being kept under wraps (the larger role of Laura Hawkins, for example, is top secret). Yet it can definitely be said that series two will delve deeper into the lives and minds of conscious synths, of which there are several new members to meet – “one of the most exciting aspects of the show,” according to Vincent.

When it comes to the conscious synths we already know, series two finds the AI family still on the run, but with most of them hiding in a cottage beside the sea.

“There’s a degree more permanence to where they are now,” says Vincent. “Leo and Max are engaged in a new mission. I can’t tell you the details, but Leo is the kind of person who loses himself in the cause. He can’t sit back and start thinking about who he really is.

“But Mia,” adds Brackley, “wants to get out there and live; to be around and interact with people. She’s on a journey of personal discovery.”

If series one was about coming to terms with consciousness, then series two seems to be about exploring what being conscious actually means. And in Mia’s case, that means developing feelings for a human.

“The main theme of series two,” says Vincent, “is about what is possible and what is impossible in terms of love and friendship between humans and these machines. We

wanted to cover all kinds of relationships – maternal, friendship, enmity, love. You have synths having relationships with each other, humans having relationships with other humans that are affected because of the existence of synths, and then of course there are several examples of humans and synths having relationships with each other.”

Indeed, one of the more striking elements of the first series was in how it explored the perverse potential of AI. We saw how synths like Niska are used in brothels; we saw Joe – in the show’s most unsettling scene – activate the “over-18” function of Anita. It begs the question: AlphaGo may have Vincent and Brackley excited that the world of *Humans* is not that far-off, but is that necessarily a good thing?

“We’re excited about finding out about the future even if there are some troubling aspects to it,” answers Vincent. “If you think of any technological advance, humans will take that technological advance and will use it for good and also use it for bad. Where would we be without the telephone? People wouldn’t be able to speak to their loved ones in different countries. But yet we also wouldn’t have prank calls, and heavy breathing, and sex lines.

“But above all, what are we going to do? Are we going to stop innovating? We are not. We have to move forward. Our point of view is that it’s important to work out where we are going and what might happen, and isn’t that what science fiction’s all about? The exploration of what could happen, what shouldn’t happen? *Humans* tries to say, ‘Here’s something wonderful but also scary and dark’ – and you can’t have one without the other when the world begins to change.” ●

*Humans* is on Channel 4 from the end of October.



Anita can somehow  
resist those cakes.



## MACHINE INTELLIGENCE

Emily Berrington  
is back as Niska

**We know that you’re sworn to secrecy, but could you give us a tease of what’s in store for Niska this series?**

Sure! As we know from the end of series one, Niska has gone off with the code for synth consciousness. So the new series is full of turmoil for Niska; to work out what to do with it and what it would mean for the world. And then things get a lot more complicated... Niska’s storyline has massive repercussions for all the characters and the world at large.

**Is she the same Niska we knew from series one?**

In series one Niska spent a lot of time being suspicious of humans but she learnt that things aren’t as black and white as she had believed. She comes into series two with a bit more of a complex approach to the world. She doesn’t just think, “Humans are bad, synths are good”. She’s definitely more trusting, without being a 100% trusting of anyone or anything.

**How was it getting back into synth mode after time away?**

It was difficult. It’s a specific discipline. For about a month before series two, I tried to do different things around the house in synth mode just to remind myself. I’d try to walk through my flat in a very efficient way, turning corners precisely. Even things like I’d try to put my jacket on. There was a really difficult scene in series one where I tried to put a jacket on as a synth and it was impossible. I think they ended up cutting it. So I thought, “This year, I’m putting on that jacket!”



# THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

In 1976, rock innovator David Bowie gave an astonishing performance as the marooned alien Thomas Jerome Newton. On its 40th anniversary, Robert Fairclough looks inside the first and finest movie of the original starman

**“He was not a man; yet he was very much like a man... His hair was as white as that of an albino, yet his face was a light tan colour; and his eyes a pale blue. His frame was improbably slight, his features delicate, his fingers long, thin, and the skin almost translucent, hairless. There was an elfin quality to his face, a fine boyish look to the wide, intelligent eyes... Man-like, he was susceptible to love, to fear, to intense physical pain and to self-pity.”**

*The Man Who Fell to Earth, Walter Tevis (1963)*

**D**avid Bowie could have been born to play Thomas Jerome Newton, the fragile alien who comes to Earth to save his dying planet. The original 1963 novel, like the film adaptation 13 years later, is a melancholy consideration of the soullessness of 20th century American life, and the destructive effect it has on Newton.

By 1976, Bowie had abandoned his Ziggy Stardust and Aladdin Sane stage personas and established himself in America with the “plastic soul” of his *Young Americans* album. The 1974 BBC documentary *Cracked Actor* had shown the star being driven around the United States in a large black limousine, talking nonsense as he grappled with a serious cocaine habit. He was very much a stranger in a strange land: “There was a story that [director] Nicolas Roeg had considered [the author] Michael Crichton for Newton because he was very tall and unusual looking,” recalls *The Man Who Fell To Earth*’s cinematographer Anthony Richmond. “Then he settled on Bowie. There’s no other actor who could have played that role, then or today.”

Richmond had known Roeg since the pair met on David Lean’s epic *Doctor Zhivago* in 1965 (“I was on that for a year”). They worked together on such distinctive 1960s films as *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*, *Fahrenheit 451* (both 1966) and the anarchic James Bond spoof *Casino Royale* (1967), before Roeg began his directing career with the Australian Outback odyssey *Walkabout* (1970). Richmond also worked on Jean-Luc Godard’s *Sympathy For The Devil* (1968), *The Rolling Stones Rock And Roll Circus* – filmed in 1968 but not released until 28 years later, in 1996 – and the warts-and-all Beatles documentary *Let It Be* (1970). “I was getting offers to do more rock and roll,” he says, “but I thought, ‘I’m not going to be able to beat the Stones, The Beatles and The Who,’ so I didn’t do any more after [*Let It Be*].”

Bowie’s co-star was Candy Clark, playing Newton’s unhappy lover Mary Lou, fresh from an Oscar nomination for her role in George Lucas’s *American Graffiti* (1973), a nostalgic tribute to early 1960s teenage life. “Nic was going into a meeting and I was waiting for him,” she tells *SFX*. “Before he went in, he gave me the script and said, ‘Here, do you want to read this?’ I read it and when Nic came out, I

told him, ‘This is brilliant, it’s fantastic!’ He said, ‘Do you want to play Mary Lou?’ ‘Of course!’

“Myself, David and Nic had a real, real good working relationship,” Candy reflects. “Nic is a great director. In every scene you can see he’s standing just outside the frame, doing some body motions telling you to pick it up or take it down. He’s really →









good at explaining what he wants and is very easy to understand.

"When I met David Bowie I thought on his looks alone he was perfect for the part. What I liked about working with him was that because he was a musician he didn't mind rehearsing. When the crew were setting up the lights to shoot one scene and we had some downtime, David and I would be running lines for one another. There was a lot of really great dialogue; we wanted to get it perfect and not change anything. [Scriptwriter] Paul Mayersberg worked really hard on getting the dialogue right, so the challenge for us was to get it exactly as he wrote it and not improvise or change it."

The principal location was the small town of Madrid in New Mexico. The film unit chose one particularly unusual location. "[The alien planet] was shot at the White Sands government missile range in Alamogordo," Richmond remembers. "I do believe we were the first people ever to shoot there. All the equipment we had to get in there was put on sleighs and pulled by horses. That's why that funny little hay bail on the monorail doesn't go very fast, because it's being pulled along out of shot by a horse."

In the Alamogordo scenes Newton's alien wife was played by none other than Candy Clark. "My [alien] make-up didn't take as long as ageing Mary Lou," the actress wryly notes. "That took a long time! They put some white make-up on that obliterated my eyebrows, gave me contact lenses and a suit that sprang leaks constantly, pouring pink water everywhere." When the unit relocated to New York, Clark stepped into the shoes of the leading man himself. "David wouldn't fly, so that's me getting into the limousine outside the building. I was wearing his clothes and had a little orange wig with a hat. People were watching the shoot from behind the barricades and I could hear them going, 'There's David Bowie!' I didn't correct them."

With the film complete, Clark prepared for the customary promotional tour. She was in for a shock: "I asked the distributor if I could see it before I went out on the road. I'd seen it in England and it was beautiful, fantastic, but when I saw it in New York it had been totally destroyed."

"It made me sick. When you devote a year and a half of your life to something... The distributor Cinema 5 was an art house distributor. Their whole reputation was based on putting out the director's cut, so everyone felt really comfortable about putting the film there. Then 5 decided they wanted it to be a straight two-hour film, instead of two hours and 23 minutes."

"They cut it willy-nilly too: they hired a guy who edited commercials. It took Nic and the film's editor Graeme Clifford a year to cut it and 5's guy butchered it in a week. It was like chopping up a Van Gogh because you have a small

## SOUND AND VISION

The lost score of  
*The Man Who Fell To Earth*

► For years there have been rumours about what Bowie did or didn't record for *The Man Who Fell To Earth* soundtrack. In August 2016, his long-time producer Tony Visconti confirmed that Bowie did work on potential music for the film after the *Station To Station* sessions, at Cherokee Studios in Los Angeles, with the assistance of producer Harry Maslin. Whether what he recorded will ever be released is another matter. In the meantime, the 40th anniversary reissue of the film is accompanied, for the first time, by the release of John Phillips and Stomu Yamashta's original score.



“When I saw the film in New York it had been totally destroyed”



frame – 'We'll just have the sunflowers, we'll leave out the background.' I saw it and went, 'Oh my god!'... I was the one who had to break the news to Nic.

"For years I had this horrible VCR of the film that no one could make any sense of. Finally, I found my moment: years later, I phoned the people at [the company] in charge of publicity and distribution, and made it sound like I was being constantly bombarded with requests from people to see the uncut version. They actually listened to me. I then said, 'You don't have to do anything. Put it out with the same poster with a banner across it saying Uncut Director's Cut – they'll be lining up around the block!' I also told them, 'I'll do whatever it takes. I'll travel with it, do radio, newspapers, whatever.'"

"When the guy called back a week or so later and said, 'Our negative's been cut', I replied, 'Oh, I know where to get the negative!' I got in touch with the producers in England, Michael Deeley and Barry Spikings at British Lion, and the rest is history."

For *The Man Who Fell To Earth*'s 40th anniversary year, Richmond has been closely involved in what he believes is the definitive DVD and Blu-ray version of the film: "Unlike the other release, which was done by someone else, I've pulled it much more akin to the film print, which is how it should be. There are a few scenes I wasn't happy with, and there was a lot of magenta in the previous version, which I've corrected. I'm very happy with it."

Richmond believes the film is more relevant than ever. "It was way ahead of its time because today corporations run the world. When Newton's in that apartment in that strange chair and watching 20 or 30 televisions, that's way ahead of its time because now we're totally bombarded with visual information. I've got 400 TV channels in Los Angeles and there's nothing worth watching. It's all garbage."

The film continues to fascinate because it merges Bowie's fictional character with his real, rock star self. He took the clothes designed for him in the film on his subsequent *Station To Station* tour, and Newton's driver and bodyguard in the film is played by Tony Mascia, Bowie's real driver and bodyguard. Strikingly, in a scene near the end of the film, a display for the *Young Americans* LP can be seen in a record shop, while Newton himself becomes a dissolute rock singer under the alias the Visitor (in the book, he records poetry).

There's no escaping the fact that the celebrations around *The Man Who Fell To Earth*'s restoration and re-release will, inevitably, be

coloured by Bowie's death in January of this year. "It was really, really sad," Richmond says. "I hadn't spoken to him for years, but whenever he performed in Los Angeles I'd get tickets and go and see him."

"*The Man Who Fell To Earth* was such an important part of my life and David's. It was an extraordinary few months. Bowie didn't act – he truly played himself." ●

*The Man Who Fell To Earth* is available on Blu-ray, DVD and download from 24 October, including a Collector's Edition.





Fag break time for Candy Clark, Bowie and director Nicolas Roeg.

## FASHION

Behind Bowie's greatest haircut

► Newton's distinctive 1930s-style, vivid red hair was developed in collaboration with Bafta winning hairstylist Martin Samuel. "Bowie requested the range of colour that I could get in London, because he couldn't get it in the States," he tells *SFX*. "When I arrived we developed the haircut. It's become an iconic image over the last 40 years. David asked me, very graciously, to stay with him for the *Station To Station* tour, right until he moved to Germany. We cut the whole thing off and he had that short blond hair. It was nice because no one else took over Newton's look."



Shooting under a baking sun.



Bowie was all smiles on set even if his character wasn't.



"You sure we're not making a Western?!"

You won't find a more '70s dress than that.



Fewer goblins than in *Labyrinth*.





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CINEMA

## MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

The X-Orphans



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 127 minutes

▶ Director **Tim Burton**

▶ Cast **Eva Green, Asa Butterfield, Samuel L. Jackson, Ella Purnell, Judi Dench, Allison Janney**

◉ **Watching *Miss Peregrine's*** sepia-tinged credit sequence, featuring books, files, maps and extremely creepy photographs, you'd be forgiven for thinking you've accidentally walked into a found footage scare flick, or the new season of *American Horror Story*.

Over the next 10 minutes, you'll see nothing to shake that

feeling. The opening moments of Tim Burton's latest kids' movie feature what appears to be a ghost, a monster, a blood-covered torch, a misty forest and the best jump scare this side of the new *Blair Witch* movie. It's shot like he's decided to remake *Sleepy Hollow* without telling anyone. It's terrifying.

It's also the darkest stretch in a film that should probably look like a Best of Burton compilation, but more often feels like nothing he's made before. It's a mixtape that starts with *The Cure* and ends with *Gabber* house. This seems to be the first time Burton's had genuine fun in years.



Beryl needed more practice at praying.



The shadow cabinet was ready for anything.

The plot sees our hero, Jake (Asa Butterfield) embark on a journey after he's gifted a link to his grandfather's mysterious past. His grandfather Abe (Terence Stamp) claims to have repeatedly visited a mysterious orphanage for peculiar children, telling young Jake wild tales about the residents' supernatural powers. Following Abe's death, Jake is sent from Florida to Wales by his psychiatrist, on a mission to find the home, and achieve closure by finding the truth behind his grandfather's stories. But what he finds is far stranger – and more dangerous – than he could possibly imagine...

And that's just the set up. We'll avoid giving spoilers past these establishing scenes, as half the fun

“ Seems to be the first time Burton's had fun in years ”

is the voyage of discovery Jake makes along the way, which features frequent twists and game-changing reveals.

The film is based on a book, by author Ransom Riggs. That was originally meant to be a collection of photographs – a picture book – only becoming a more traditional novel after a publisher wisely advised Riggs to incorporate the





pictures into a narrative. That explains the opening credit sequence, and, perhaps, Burton's interest in the project. The book's strong visual origins, combined with its outcast fairytale plot, fit perfectly into an oeuvre that includes *Edward Scissorhands*, *Beetlejuice* and *Corpse Bride*. Which isn't to say there aren't surprises. If you told us the new Tim Burton movie would feature a brief tribute to rude Welsh rap group Goldie Lookin Chain we'd have checked your pipe for wacky baccy.

That said, it's not perfect – or completely original. The pacing is odd, with half the runtime passing before we're introduced to a very important character. There are a couple of very scary gore

moments, more suited to a VHS horror movie. And one exposition sequence – describing gifted children with regressive genes that give them superpowers, causing them to be persecuted by ordinary members of society – reads like it was ripped right from issue one of *The X-Men* and glued straight into Jane Goldman's script. Still, in the *X-Men* comics that speech would be accompanied by a picture of Cyclops blasting lasers from his eyeballs, or Wolverine cutting a robot in two. Here, it's intercut with a little girl growing a giant carrot. In these circumstances any unoriginality is easy to forgive.

And any bumps in the road along the way are forgiven during an impossibly charming climax,

which features one of the weirdest setpieces (containing one of the most surprising director cameos) we've ever seen.

When it comes to the performances, lead Asa Butterfield is compelling enough, but the real star is Jake's love interest, Emma Bloom, whose power includes the ability to float like a kite. She's played by Ella Purnell, an actress whose gift is the ability to steal every scene she's in. Purnell looks like a mini Helena Bonham Carter, so it seems that the more Burton changes, the more he stays the same. On the strength of this fun film, we're not complaining.

**Sam Ashurst**

**i** The village of Cairnholm is Portholland in Cornwall. Burton's team built more shops and a graveyard, covering up a car park.

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Four places you *wouldn't* want to grow up...



### GRAYSTARK HALL

*Doctor Who*'s "Day Of The Moon" visited this American orphanage, which had messages like "GET OUT NOW" scrawled on the walls, and Silents roosting like bats. Occupants: one, a little girl in a spacesuit...

### ST LOUISE'S ORPHANAGE

Darkseid minion Granny Goodness is not aptly named, given her use of brainwashing and torture. In *Smallville*'s "Abandoned" she uses her position as an orphanage administrator to wipe girls' minds so that they can be trained as warriors.

### COOKIEVILLE

*Futurama*'s Leela grew up in this "minimum-security orphanarium", with a warden who continually told her, "You're worthless and no one will ever love you!" There were no books cos the kids were so hungry they ate them!

### THE SANTA LUCIA SCHOOL

The orphanage in Guillermo del Toro's Spanish Civil War chiller *The Devil's Backbone* probably wouldn't be so bad but for two details: attacks from Franco's forces, and a ghost boy with blood seeping, smoke-like, from a crack in his head... Yikes!





CINEMA

## GIRLS LOST

It's a boy/girl thing



▶ **RELEASED 4 NOVEMBER**

15 | 106 minutes

▶ Director Alexandra-Therese Keining

▶ Cast Tuva Jagell, Louise Nyvall, Wilma Holmén, Emrik Öhlander

### ♦ It's hard being a teenage girl.

It's particularly hard when you don't look like the popular girls, or act like them, or even particularly want to be one of them. Best friends Kim (Tuva Jagell), Momo (Louise Nyvall) and Bella (Wilma Holmén) have it particularly hard, their awkwardness making them the perfect target for school bullies. But everything changes when they discover a magic plant with the power to turn them into teenage boys...

Based on award-winning Young Adult novel *Pojkarna* (it translates as *The Boys*), this Swedish supernatural drama is essentially

a body-swap story, but with none of the jokes you'd expect from that genre. Instead, it's a sensitive and heartfelt exploration of gender, and what it means to be a girl – or a boy. Some of the visual metaphors are a little on the nose (butterflies? Really?) but it's gorgeously lensed, and the transformation scenes are stunning.

The final act feels a little overstuffed, as it tries to pack in pretty much every problem a teen of either gender might encounter, and because there's so much going on some of the emotional beats don't hit as hard as they should. Still, better too many ideas than too few, and the quietly devastating ending leaves you with plenty to think about. **Sarah Dobbs**

**i** None of the young cast had any previous acting experience. The director auditioned six or seven hundred kids to find them.



The window's hairstyle was coming along nicely.

## CAPTAIN AMERICA

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"I'm taking this soap back to Boots."

## PHANTOM BOY

Out of body adventures

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 21 OCTOBER**

PG | 84 minutes

▶ Directors Alain Gagnol,

Jean-Loup Felicioli

▶ Cast Fred Armisen, Vincent

D'Onofrio, Jared Padalecki

### ⚙️ This amiable French

animation is part paranormal fantasy, part Batman and Dick Tracy pastiche.

In Manhattan, a little boy is hospitalised. But he has a power – he can project himself into an astral body, soaring into the sky to see all. When the city's threatened by a jigsaw-faced gangster, the boy and a policeman recovering in hospital team up to save the day.

It's a good mix of genres, even if individual elements are only partly successful. The crime story is sometimes exciting, but the villains are too buffoonish, even when they brandish guns. Many of the jokes are good, but they can dissipate the film's momentum. The boy's medical condition is a clear threat, and there's a subtle ambiguity about how we should understand the story. But the resolution feels disappointingly safe, given how the film seems to be shaping up.

The look evokes a colourful *bandes dessinées* strip, with strong lines and flickering shadows – though the characters' mouths are less successful. The strings-heavy suspense music brings back memories of *Batman: The Animated Series*, adding further appeal to this thoroughly decent cartoon. **Andrew Osmond**

**i** Movie in-jokes include a spoof of a famous image from *Manhattan*, and a "don't feed after midnight" quip.



Skinny Dave stood up and ruined another photo.

## SWISS ARMY MAN

Harry Bot-air

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

15 | 97 minutes

▶ Directors Daniel Scheinert, Dan Kwan

▶ Cast Paul Dano, Daniel Radcliffe,

Mary Elizabeth Winstead

### ⚙️ The final line in *Swiss Army*

*Man* is "What the fuck?!" It'll no doubt resonate with audiences, who'll likely be questioning what the hell they've just seen.

The first feature from directors Daniel Scheinert and Dan Kwan, *Swiss Army Man* lays out its stall from the get-go. Hank (Paul Dano) is stranded on an island. Resigned to his doom, he's on the brink of suicide when a corpse (Daniel Radcliffe) washes ashore, offering a chance of salvation. The *Swiss Army Man* of the title, Manny's usefulness is revealed instantly: his flatulence propels him through the water, and Hank rides him like a jet ski. When they hit dry land the bromance starts, as the pair make their way towards Hank's home.

As stiff, motionless corpse Manny, Radcliffe delivers an impressive physical performance. It's another bold post-Potter move that helps demonstrate

his considerable range.

Through the course of their travels, Hank fills Manny in on his lonely life, and the girl he carries an unrequited love for, often using handmade puppets and models to illustrate his points. It's a kooky touch, but one that works in the context of the generally surreal tone. And as Manny slowly learns about life and love (making him a more interesting update on Frankenstein's monster than Radcliffe's recent box office bomb), the crude humour is given heartfelt context. It'll be a little too gross for certain tastes, but go with it and you'll be rewarded with something deeper and more personal than your standard fratboy comedy.

As their journey goes on, and Manny proves to have even more skills, the absurd laughs come thick and fast, but it's the emerging friendship that sticks with you more than the ridiculous images. By the end of the film, you may even just find yourself being moved by a fart gag. WTF indeed.

**Matt Maytum**

**i** Near the end of the movie, Shane Carruth (director of *Primer* and *Upstream Color*) has a cameo as the coroner.



The wedding reception was a disaster.

## THE DARKEST UNIVERSE

★★★★☆

▶ **RELEASED 4 NOVEMBER**

15 | 87 minutes

⚙️ **Hovering right on the line** between genre piece and traditional character drama, this beautifully crafted British independent film follows the story of Zac (Will Sharpe), whose eccentric sister Alice (Tiani Ghosh) has gone missing. Carefully balancing quirky comedy with poignant drama, this is a sweet, charming and melancholy story that's brave enough to be ambiguous, and takes a hard, affecting look at grief, obsession, and the need for answers in life. **Saxon Bullock**

## ALSO+OUT



Five more films to mention that didn't screen before our deadline. Adam West animated movie **BATMAN: RETURN OF THE CAPED CRUSADERS** is in cinemas for one night only on 17 October. See <http://bit.ly/sfxcaped> for your nearest cinema – we'll review the Blu-ray next issue. On 21 October, **TROLLS** spins off from the doll range, while **OUIJA: ORIGIN OF EVIL** centres on a séance scam in 1967. The month's biggie comes on 25 October, as **DOCTOR STRANGE** weaves his Marvel magic. Finally, Noomi Rapace discovers she has alien DNA in **RUPTURE**, a simultaneous theatrical/VOD release on 4 November.



## X-MEN: APOCALYPSE

Blue's Explosions

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 7 NOVEMBER  
(Blu-ray/DVD)/24 OCTOBER  
(download)

2016 | 12 | Blu-ray/Blu-ray 3D/  
4k Blu-ray/DVD/download

▶ Director Bryan Singer

▶ Cast Jennifer Lawrence, James  
McAvoy, Michael Fassbender, Sophie  
Turner, Oscar Isaac, Nicholas Hoult

⦿ **Time and again during his** commentary for *Apocalypse*, director Bryan Singer claims that this is Raven's film, in the same way that *First Class* was Magneto's film and *Days Of Future Past* was Charles's film. And therein lies the problem. It isn't. It isn't any character's film. There are moments when various characters get to shine, sure, but no one gets a meaty through-plot. There are better emotional journeys on *The X Factor*.

Singer may think that the core of this latest X-Men film is Raven's journey from loner to team player, but ask 100 people who've seen the movie what they think it's about and we'd be surprised if more than five mentioned Raven. They're more likely to say it's a film about some ancient blue

supervillain with a god complex collecting mutants like they're Pokémon, while some new teen recruits at Xavier's School have problems controlling both their powers and their '80s hairstyles.

*Apocalypse* is a mess of plots and characters fighting for attention – because you don't employ actors like James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender and Jennifer Lawrence without promising them a couple of good scenes each to chew on. But then Singer also has to give newbies like his younger versions of Cyclops, Jean Grey and Nightcrawler something to do. And the villains something to do. And Charles's returning old flame Moira MacTaggart something to do. And Beast something to do...

In the past Singer's shown deft balancing skills, but here the spinning plates are crashing at his feet. There are many impressive individual scenes – the shocking fate of Erik's family, *Apocalypse* enticing Psylocke to his side – and a spectacular climax, but there's no flow, no momentum, no emotional engagement.

Oscar Isaac's *Apocalypse* is a sorely disappointing villain; we're not given enough of his

"...so this is how we think the Wembley arch will look..."



history to understand his MO, and his interaction with the 20th century is detached and abstract. He destroys famous landmarks, sure, but the only reaction shots are of people looking awestruck, not scared. The spectacle is pretty rather than terrifying. And while the '60s and '70s settings of the previous films were cleverly worked into the story, here the '80s feels like just another gimmick.

Meanwhile Team Teen-X struggles to make an impression. Sophie Turner has to do a cover version of Famke Janssen in *X2/3* ("Oooh headaches... bad dreams... oh hang on. I'm really bloody

“A mess of plots and characters fighting for attention”

powerful, let's make like a bird"). Quicksilver has to try to top his showstopping scene in *Days Of Future Past*, and fails. Cyclops is as whingey as ever. Nightcrawler's tail has more character than the rest of them put together. It's all worryingly familiar in a franchise





that normally knows how to push forward. And when it comes to Team Apocalypse, Psylocke, Angel and Storm are barely more than eye-candy.

The shame is that somewhere underneath all this excess is a good story about Raven and differing ideologies of what the X-Men should stand for. It's just well and truly lost in a kaleidoscope of misjudged fan-service. Watched in small doses there's fun to be had here, but all in one go? It's something of a chore.

🔗 **Extras** When you listen to Bryan Singer's amusing and trivia-packed commentary, you do

warm towards *X-Men: Apocalypse* – a little. He's just a natural charmer. He's partnered on the commentary by producer/co-writer Simon Kinberg, who occasionally chips in.

Then you get eight deleted scenes (28 minutes in total) – many of which are great, all of which have been dropped for running time/pacing reasons. When scenes as entertaining as the mall montage (Teen-X goes shopping, Nightcrawler looks longingly at sneakers) don't make the final cut you suspect the filmmakers were never quite sure what the main thrust of their film was.

The gag reel (eight minutes) is

huge fun, and exceptionally well edited, especially a montage of dance moves. A wrap party video (five minutes) features more behind-the-scenes footage and finds a place to contextualise that “Beast Mode” Dubsmash video that went viral earlier in the year.

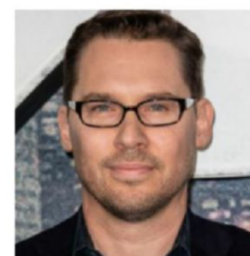
Finally there's the 64-minute Making Of, which is solid enough but not the most revealing movie documentary ever; there's a little too much back-slapping. You do learn, however, that Psylocke's costume was made by an LA fetish shop... **Dave Golder**

**i** The woman with Stan Lee during his cameo is his wife. She offered the crew martinis after the shot was done.



## BRYAN SINGER

Director of *X-Men: Apocalypse*



**Were there aspects of Apocalypse you thought about using but didn't?**

→ I considered making him just a giant, but then suddenly every shot is a motion-control shot. It was important to me that we allow Oscar Isaac to connect on a human level.

**What made Oscar the right choice?**

→ One, he's a brilliant actor. Also, he has a multi-ethnicity that one could imagine could rule Sumerian Babylon or South America. And we saw eye to eye on how to explore the history of the character. Oscar wrote some wonderful stuff describing his character, and some of that made it into the script.

**Is it often that collaborative?**

→ I give the actors some latitude. Michael Fassbender walked in one day and said, “Can you please not call cut?” After the words were done in the script he kept going with this idea he had, and I was brought to tears. When Michael decided it was over I gave him a huge hug and said, “Thank you for that gift... but I need you to do it again, because I need to move the cameras around!” And he did it flawlessly again. I was like, “Holy shit!”

**Ian Berriman**

REX (3)





## DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

- ☞ Lucifer loses his temper and shows his scary face.
- ☞ Chloe sees something that can't be rationally explained... but just shrugs it off.
- ☞ Lucifer uses his Jedi mind powers.
- ☞ There's a murder, Lucifer bounces around the bloodstained crime scene like a puppy, and nobody minds.
- ☞ A song about the devil plays on the soundtrack.
- ☞ Chloe's kid is being impossibly cute/perky and you feel you're supposed to go "Awwww!"

The hotel staff at reception could be a little intense.

# LUCIFER Season One

## The devil and the detective

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**

2016 | 15 | DVD

▶ Creator Tom Kapinos

▶ Cast Tom Ellis, Lauren German, DB Woodside, Lesley-Ann Brandt

☛ **Imagine if somebody decided** to make an American cop show in the style of *Are You Being Served?*, with British innuendos flying all over the place, and with a lead character who's none other than Satan himself. Can you picture the devil making cracks (pun intended) about Mrs Slocombe's pussy?

Well, imagine no longer: Fox has, inexplicably, cast one-time *EastEnders* and *Miranda* star Tom Ellis as the sassiest, smuttiest Lucifer you'll ever see – a naughty little devil so filthy he'll make a

double-entendre out of anything, like a cunning-linguist MacGyver. Thankfully, the majority of his puns are funny, although occasionally you do wish Lucifer would calm down; he's like a 12-year-old who's just discovered what sex is and can't stop smirking about it. Mind you, that also sums up how a fallen angel *would* feel after fleeing from thousands of years in hell to live with randy humans in California, so perhaps we can forgive him.

The show bears little similarity to the Vertigo comic on which it's based and is just one of a batch of recent series, from *Constantine* to *Preacher*, adapted from comics dealing with characters with links to hell. Here, though, the addition of a police-procedural format (as

Lucifer teams up with an LA detective to solve crimes) gives it a familiar, comfortable spin. It's a juxtaposition that has admittedly been done to death, but which contrasts deliciously with Lucifer's unusually British bawdiness.

And as he wanders from crime scene to crime scene driving his homicide detective partner Chloe insane with his chitter-chatter – but always helping her solve the crime – you can't help but enjoy yourself. Sure, if you don't click with Ellis's puppy-dog performance, you're doomed; and a subplot about Lucifer's grumpy brother Amenadiel is irritating until it builds to something interesting later on. Oh, and in one of the most Bechdel-baiting roles in recent TV, Lucifer has a giggly

therapist who either worries about him or bonks him – maybe she'll actually get to do something that isn't *him* in season two...

But even if you aren't charmed by Lucifer's innuendos or are annoyed by his way with the ladies (and even a few guys...), you might enjoy watching the delightfully exasperated Chloe roll her eyes and look as though she wants to strangle him. In her thankless role as Satan's straight-man, Lauren German is quite brilliant – underplaying everything Ellis overplays, giving him "as if" looks when he claims to be an angel, and often proving herself way cleverer than he is. With an on-screen couple as heavenly as this, *Lucifer* really does have wings.

☛ **Extras** Nothing thrilling: the show's 2015 Comic-Con panel (13 minutes), six short featurettes (mostly one-minute "character profiles"), ten deleted scenes (six minutes) and a gag reel. **Jayne Nelson**

**i** Christian protest group One Million Moms petitioned to stop *Lucifer* being made because it "mischaracterises Satan".





## WHEN MARNIE WAS THERE

Studio Ghibli's sweet sayonara

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2014 | U | Blu-ray & DVD (double-play)/DVD

▶ Director Hiromasa Yonebayashi

▶ Cast Hailee Steinfeld, Kiernan Shipka, Geena Davis, Kathy Bates

◆ **Studio Ghibli's final film** is comfortingly Ghibli in some respects and yet something totally different as well. It's a return to the studio's signature lush animation style and also a return to English children's literature for inspiration (in this case a 1967 book by Joan Robinson).

But the storytelling here is something excitingly fresh and new for the studio. A coming-of-age tale for a depressed girl, Anna,

it may start in classic fashion – with an orphan child packed off to relatives in the country – but, shockingly, her relatives are *really* lovely. It's Anna's own depression that causes the friction. Until she befriends a mysterious girl...

It's sweet, it's beautiful and it's proof that Ghibli was prepared to push boundaries until the end. We're gonna miss you.

◆ **Extras** An option to watch the entire film in storyboards; an English featurette interviewing the Western voice cast (12 minutes); a Making Of (42 minutes); an odd featurette about an art show (17 minutes); trailers. **Dave Golder**

**i** The original book was inspired by Norfolk village Burnham Overy. The author is buried in the churchyard there.

## WARCRAFT: THE BEGINNING

World Of Bore-craft

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 12 | Blu-ray 3D/4K Blu-ray/Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Duncan Jones

▶ Cast Travis Fimmel, Paula Patton, Ben Foster, Dominic Cooper

◆ **It's based on what producer** Thomas Tull calls "arguably the most successful entertainment property in history". And it's been in development for the best part of a decade. So there's really no excuse for this big-screen take on all-conquering MMORPG *World Of Warcraft* being such an epic disappointment. It excels at squeezing loads of characters, species and locations from the game into its two-hour running

time, but is ultimately tired cinematic fantasy by numbers.

If you like spotting kings, mages, Elves, Dwarves, Orcs and griffins then *Warcraft* will be your promised land. Otherwise you'll be struggling to negotiate lumpen, humour-free dialogue and an uninspired plot about a war between humans and an Orc Horde that's frequently sidetracked by info-dumps.

While the world of *Azeroth* is beautifully designed, little about it feels real – every CG vista serves as a reminder that Peter Jackson's decision to use real New Zealand locations for *The Lord Of The Rings* was spot on. That said, the performance-captured Orcs are a triumph, feeling like living,



breathing characters. Interestingly, they exist in a shades-of-grey world rather than being agents of pure evil, and fare rather better than their bland human counterparts, most of whom look utterly confused by the world they find themselves in. Maybe they'd rather be playing the game...

◆ **Extras** The DVD just has 12 deleted/extended scenes (14 minutes) and a gag reel (three minutes). The Blu-ray adds more: the six-part "The World Of Warcraft

On Film" (34 minutes), covers all the usual behind-the-scenes stuff; "Warcraft: The Madame Tussauds Experience" (eight minutes) looks at the waxwork exhibit; "The Fandom Of Warcraft" (seven minutes) shows why the game's such a big deal. You also get a motion comic (54 minutes), an ILM effects reel (three minutes) and the trailer. **Richard Edwards**

**i** Star Rob Kazinsky is something of a *WoW* fan – he's logged 473 days in the game, and was in the world top 100 guild.



## POWERS Season One

### Cops vs capes

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Creators Charlie Huston,

Brian Michael Bendis

▶ Cast Sharlto Copley, Noah Taylor,

Susan Heyward, Eddie Izzard

🔹 In today's world of superhero popularity and prestige TV shows, an adaptation of Brian Michael Bendis's gritty comic series *Powers* sounded like a slam-dunk, especially in the wake of *The Walking Dead*'s success. Unfortunately, the results have ended up proving that even well-intentioned comic-book adaptations can seriously backfire.

Set in Los Angeles and based in a world where superpowered heroes are the equivalent of Hollywood stars, the show follows

the Powers Department, a branch of the police tasked with investigating superhuman-related crimes. Their highest-profile officer is Detective Walker (District 9's Sharlto Copley), who used to be one of the superhuman "Powers" himself, fighting crime as the famed vigilante Diamond, before he permanently lost his abilities. This first season follows Walker as he investigates the criminal activities of old friend-turned-adversary Johnny Royale (Noah Taylor).

Sadly, while *Powers* has a strong central twist on the traditional cop show, the series frequently lacks focus and doesn't have the budget or creativity to match its ambition. The PlayStation Network's first original drama series, it features plenty of violence and swearing,

but is clearly functioning on far less money than other US superhero shows. The scale of the episodes often feels too small, and the CG and practical effects are frequently inadequate in some of the larger setpieces – especially when characters start flying.

These issues wouldn't matter too much if the rest of the drama was effective, but the series gets muddy in its execution, indulging in clunky exposition and becoming way too enamoured of Walker's brooding over the loss of his powers. Copley is badly miscast as the hero and his twitchy, angsty performance makes Walker a hero who's very difficult to like.

Frustratingly, despite these flaws and some shaky early episodes, there are points where you get glimpses of the ambitious superhero show *Powers* is trying to be. Whenever the series forgets about satirising stardom and concentrates on the life of ordinary cops in a superhero world, it's an engaging and often entertaining watch. Eddie Izzard makes a surprisingly creepy villain as the life-force-draining Power Wolfe; there's also a mid-season prison-break storyline that's both gripping and ferociously gory.

Unfortunately, these quality spikes never last long enough, and the central problem of Copley's miscasting, the lack of conceptual focus and the budgetary restrictions all eventually prevent *Powers* from taking flight. It's still an interesting take on superheroes, but in a TV landscape featuring comic book shows as impressive as *Daredevil* and *Jessica Jones*, simply being "interesting" isn't quite enough.

🔹 **Extras** Two ten-minute featurettes that cover the creation and development of the show (especially the changes made from the comic), plus 18 minutes of deleted scenes and a two-minute gag reel. DVD buyers just get one featurette. **Saxon Bullock**

**i** A previous TV incarnation of *Powers* for FX got as far as a pilot episode in 2011, but failed to get picked up.



"Hello. Welcome to the bald men page."

## THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Craven lunatics

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1977 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Wes Craven

▶ Cast Susan Lanier, Robert Houston,

Martin Speer, John Steadman

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** Wes Craven's

brutal shocker has lost little of its impact four decades on. The story of a middle-class family who are set upon by a gang of deranged mutants after their car breaks down in the middle of the desert, it utilises its barren, eerie location to the full and has a second half of relentless screaming terror.

It thankfully avoids the pitfalls many slasher films of the '80s would fall into: these attackers are a memorable, quirky bunch, and it's good to see a family, rather than kids, as protagonists, whose behaviour is mostly logical. Plus there's a heroic dog to cheer.

🔹 **Extras** This new 4k restoration comes with three commentaries, by Craven and producer Peter Locke, the cast (new), and academic Mikel J Koven (new). You also get the 2003 Making Of (60 minutes); new interviews with actor Martin Speer (17 minutes) and composer Don Peake (11 minutes); a (less effective) alternate ending; freshly unearthed and mildly interesting outtakes (19 minutes); trailers; TV spots; a gallery; a PDF of the screenplay. The Blu-ray comes with six postcards, a poster and a booklet. **Russell Lewin**

**i** One of the reasons Janus Blythe got the part of Ruby was that she ran faster than the other auditionees!







## IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

Bradbury Bodysnatchers

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**  
 1953 | PG | Blu-ray 3D  
 Director Jack Arnold  
 Cast Richard Carlson, Barbara Rush

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** This one's all about the firsts. It was the first sci-fi film directed by Jack Arnold (*Tarantula* etc), the first to utilise a desert location, and one of the first major studio 3D productions.

It doesn't stop there, with regards to this disc: the film's on Blu-ray here for the first time – and, excitingly, in 3D too. While there's also a 2D option, this Ray Bradbury tale of an astronomer finding aliens will likely be best enjoyed as it was at '50s drive-ins ("Fantastic Sights Leap At You!").

Sixty-three years later, *It's* story, with its body-borrowing aliens, is not that surprising. That's forgivable of course, because this is where so much started, but the film spins what now seems a standard yarn. It's full of good things, though, from its eerie score to its subjective alien viewpoint shots, and the way that tension is gradually built.

**Extras** All the extras are carried from the previous DVD release: an entertaining half-hour documentary on Universal's sci-fi movies; a vigorous fact-a-second commentary by film historian Tim Weaver; trailers. **Russell Lewin**

**i** Both Bradbury and Arnold wanted a monster-free movie, but Universal insisted on seeing the "Xenomorphs" true form.



### DR STRANGE

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**  
 1978 | U | DVD

**Marvel's sorcerer came to** television as part of the same deal that gave us *The Incredible Hulk*. While that show's grounded take made it a hit, this doomed pilot embraces its comic book roots.

It's surprisingly ambitious, in fact, dealing out demons, otherworldly dimensions, mystical zaps and an Astral Plane that's as trippily '70s as a Studio 54 light show. But saddled with Peter Hooten's bland, fresh-faced Strange, this origin tale never quite earns the Eye of Agamotto.

**Extras** None. **Nick Setchfield**



### FOR THE LOVE OF SPOCK

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED OUT NOW!**  
 2016 | 12 | Download/VOD

**Leonard Nimoy's son Adam** delivers a heartfelt exploration of the man, the phenomenon and the father in this documentary tribute to the late *Star Trek* star.

Mixing rare footage – news reports, home movies – with insights from the likes of William Shatner and Simon Pegg, it's the human story behind TV's archetypal alien.

Ultimately the man behind the icon remains elusive, but you're left in no doubt that he touched the world. **Nick Setchfield**



### THE FRANKENSTEIN COMPLEX

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED OUT NOW!**  
 2015 | 15 | DVD

**Who are the most** important people in SF&F movies? The men who design the monsters, you say? Then this documentary is for you.

Packed with loquacious big industry names, all it lacks is more footage from the actual films discussed. But it's engrossing nonetheless.

**Extras** Extended chats with four creatives (13 minutes), plus a swearsy del Toro masterclass (73 minutes). **Russell Lewin**



### STIGMATA

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**  
 1999 | 18 | Blu-ray & DVD  
 (dual format)

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** **When** hairdresser Patricia Arquette starts manifesting Christ's wounds, it's down to rogue priest Gabriel Byrne to figure out what's going on.

Equal parts possession shocker and RE lesson, *Stigmata* is more fun to watch for the '90s nostalgia than the scares. And while this new Blu-ray transfer is decent enough, it's hardly a revelation.

**Extras** Making Of (26 mins); director's commentary; deleted scenes; alternate ending; music video; trailer. **Sarah Dobbs**





It was the best that Specsavers could manage at short notice.

## GODS OF EGYPT

### The twaddle of the Sphinx

★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

▶ **RELEASED 24 OCTOBER**

(Blu-ray/DVD)/OUT NOW!

(download)

2016 | 12 | Blu-ray/Blu-ray 3D/

DVD/download

▶ Director Alex Proyas

▶ Cast Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Brenton Thwaites, Élodie Yung, Gerard Butler

🔗 **If the script for *Gods Of Egypt*** fell back through time and into the hands of Ray Harryhausen circa 1974, he may have made a kitsch classic out of it. Stripped of its gaudy videogame aesthetic, and shot on location instead with the occasional stop-motion monster, it could have been a great, cheesy follow-up to *The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad*. But this isn't 1974. Blockbusters have moved on.

Nikolaj Coster-Waldau plays Horus, deposed by evil brother Set (Gerard Butler), who nicks his

eyes. This sends Horus into a sulk until a plucky human, Bek (Brenton Thwaites), helps Horus regain his eyes, dignity and throne by being annoyingly cheerful.

Technically there's virtuosity here, but it's a lot of effort dumped into a creative vacuum. With its painfully artificial virtual sets, arch performances, pompous dialogue and ADHD pacing, *Gods Of Egypt* lacks a unifying vision. Unless that unifying vision is "let's make a crap film".

➕ **Extras** Six 10-minute(ish) featurettes on the stunts, effects, cast, hair, costumes and make-up, production design and shooting in Australia (the DVD just has two). The Blu-ray also has animated storyboards for two scenes that didn't make the cut. **Dave Golder**

**i** Nikolaj Coster-Waldau wore a see-through eyepatch for fight scenes so he didn't suffer from a lack of depth perception.

## TMNT: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

### Cowadunga!

★★★☆☆ EXTRAS ★★★☆☆

▶ **RELEASED 24 OCTOBER**

(Blu-ray/DVD)/10 OCTOBER

(digital)

2016 | 12 | Blu-ray, Blu-ray 3D,

4K Blu-ray, DVD, VOD, download

▶ Director Dave Green

▶ Cast Megan Fox, Will Arnett,

Stephen Amell, Brian Tee

🔗 **It's important to note, first of all, that *Out Of The Shadows*** is a dramatic improvement on its 2014 predecessor, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

The tone, for instance, is more faithful to the '80s animated series, especially in its embracing of fun, out-there elements like warthog-rhino duo Bebop and Rocksteady and alien villain

Krang. The Turtles too no longer look like the stuff of nightmares, having been given a subtle, cartoonish makeover. Nor are they as obnoxiously inane. It also has a better script; a better story; a better look and feel. And yet all that still only just brings it up to the level of "bearable".

Although produced, again, by Michael Bay, directorial duties have passed this time from Jonathan Liebesman to Dave Green, whose emotional storytelling shone in 2014 sci-fi *Earth To Echo*. There is only so much he can do here, however. For having inherited most of the first film's writing team, he is stuck executing a script tailor-made for the stupidest of



Lockjaw can be a terrible thing.

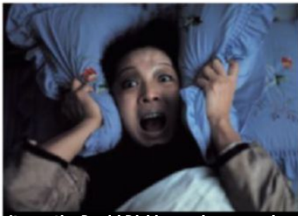
12-year-olds; ones that need exposition fired into their faces; that need Megan Fox dressed as a sexy schoolgirl; that need six villains because they couldn't possibly concentrate for long enough on one. And if that sounds insulting then that's because it is.

🔗 **Extras** On DVD: a piece on the actors behind the CGI (eight minutes), a tour of the Turtles' van

(four minutes), and three deleted scenes (five minutes) – including a wisely-cut cameo from original April O'Neil Judith Hoag. The Blu-ray adds bits on the new characters, the Turtles' pad, ILM's effects, and Easter Eggs (27 minutes). **Stephen Kelly**

**i** Kevin Eastman, co-creator of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, has a cameo role as a pizza delivery guy.





It was the David Dickinson dream again.

## HEX

Hong Kong horror hysteria

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1980 | 18 | Blu-ray & DVD  
(dual format)

▶ Director Kuei Chih-Hung

▶ Cast Tien Ni, Wang Yung,

Chen Szu-Chia

### ● Hong Kong's Shaw

Brothers studio is rightly famous for its martial arts movies, but it also worked in other genres, including horror. Now 88 Films have launched their new 88 Asia Collection imprint with a typically bonkers example.

This historical tale sees an abusive husband and his lover conspiring to scare his wife to death by pretending his drowned corpse has returned to menace her. But then the wife's spirit – or is it?! – starts haunting the scheming couple in return...

Mist-shrouded sets, outrageously melodramatic music, XL performances and broad comic relief – on seeing the ghost, a visiting workman wets himself with almost explosive force – combine in hugely entertaining style.

But what's most memorable is the way the wife's ghost (or is it?!?) is finally cast out, via what's surely cinema's *sexiest* exorcism. This involves her buck naked spirit moaning ecstatically as she's whipped and has dog's blood spat onto her breasts. At frankly unnecessary length. Utterly gobsmlacking.

● **Extras** Hong Kong movie expert Bey Logan discusses the history of Shaw Brothers studios and the languages of HK cinema (30 minutes); trailer; eight-page booklet. **Ian Berriman**

**i** The 88 Asia Collection's next Shaw Brothers horror is due for release on 24 October: 1975 shocker *Black Magic*.



Every mealtime the food got worse.

## THE CONJURING 2

Warren Blighty

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**

(Blu-ray/DVD)/OUT NOW!

(download)

2016 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/download

▶ Director James Wan

▶ Cast Patrick Wilson, Vera Farmiga, Madison Wolfe, Frances O'Connor

### ● The main strength of this

sequel to James Wan's horror hit about paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren is that it's set in a rainy, grey '70s Britain – albeit an alternate-universe one where semi-detached houses are unusually roomy and *The Goodies* airs in the afternoon... Just the fact that the usual poltergeist/possession tropes play out in a milieu where people with Cockney accents say "Wanker!" is refreshing.

It revisits events in Enfield in 1977, which saw 11-year-old Janet Hodgson speaking in the voice of an old man called Bill. The UK's best-documented such case, it's perhaps a little *too* well-known – especially to anyone who saw Sky Living's 2015 miniseries *The Enfield Haunting*.

To their credit, Wan and his co-writers freshen things up, adding elements like a painting of

a demonic nun, and providing a suitably dramatic finale for a situation which in reality petered out. They also take steps to flesh out the Warrens' relationship.

But if anything they layer on too much. A patience-testing 62 minutes pass before the Warrens even arrive in London. And while a pipecleaner-limbed entity from a Zoetrope – the Crooked Man – is shuddersome, it feels like it belongs in a different, more fantastical franchise.

● **Extras** The DVD has just four deleted scenes (six minutes): nowt essential, though they do usefully explain why the Hodgson kids are never at school and help foreshadow a twist. The Blu-ray adds five more bonuses (42 minutes). Highlights: a featurette on the Crooked Man – astonishingly *not* CGI, but a very skinny bloke – and a piece on the real-life case; this interviews the grown-up Hodgson girls, and captures an on-set reunion with Lorraine Warren. Plus: a general Making Of, a bit on the score, and some cobbler about the sound stage being haunted. **Ian Berriman**

**i** The *Goodies* ep seen on TV at one point is "Earthanasia". James Wan saw the show as a kid in Australia, and is a big fan.



The hipsters' Grand National began.

## THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

Camelot '70s-BBC style

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1979 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Rodney Bennett

▶ Cast Andrew Burt, Felicity Dean, Maureen O'Brien, David Robb

### ● Somehow, despite being

written by UK scriptwriting juggernaut Andrew Davies (A *Very Peculiar Practice*, *House Of Cards*), this eight-part Arthurian fantasy series is largely forgotten. There's a reason for that. It's pretty forgettable.

Only *Doctor Who* fans tend to remember it, because former First Doctor companion Maureen O'Brien plays Morgan Le Fay. She's actually not bad, adding an air of arch evil to a series that's desperately earnest. Magic is at a minimum here – Merlin exists in episode two – as the series tries to make the Shakespearean version of Camelot Will himself never got round to.

There's some gorgeous dialogue, solid acting and wonderfully silly costumes and make-up. But it's very static and stagey, lurching from setpiece to setpiece as it tries to remix the entire *Le Morte D'Arthur* into a series of underdeveloped vignettes. The main story – Morgan destroying Arthur's idyll of Camelot by stirring things between Lancelot and Guinevere – provides only a flimsy backbone. And the fight scenes are amusingly terrible.

Historically interesting, then, but far from legendary.

● **Extras** None. **Dave Golder**

**i** Patsy Kensit played Morgan Le Fay as a girl, hair dyed red. She was promised it'd wash out, but it took a year to go!





Carol was fascinated by knobs.

## CAT PEOPLE



Paws and effect

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1942 | PG | Blu-ray

▶ Director Jacques Tourneur

▶ Cast Simone Simon, Kent Smith, Tom Conway, Jane Randolph

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** “Nothing

disappears more quickly than film,” claimed Jacques Tourneur, director of this timeless slice of horror-noir. He would have appreciated the irony of a newly restored 2K digital transfer, preserving his 1942 masterpiece on Blu-ray.

Produced by Val Lewton, the king of shadow-draped cinema, the original *Cat People* remains a compelling, immersive watch. Tourneur’s extraordinary use of light, sound and suggestion create a nocturnal poetry from the tale of a shape-shifting Serbian émigré who brings an old world curse to

New York. It’s an enduringly sensuous, sensual piece of filmmaking, as elegant, as mesmerising as smoke.

▶ **Extras** The highlight of this Criterion Collection release is feature-length 2008 documentary *Val Lewton: The Man In The Shadows*, an insightful celebration of his life and work. There’s also an engaging interview/masterclass with Jacques Tourneur from ’70s French movie show *Cine Regards*, and a featurette in which John Bailey – cinematographer on the ’80s remake – discusses the work of his predecessor, Nicholas Musuraca. Plus: commentary by film historian Gregory Mank, an essay by poet and film critic Geoffrey O’Brien, and the trailer.

**Nick Setchfield**

i “You will never see a striped tie in any of my films,” said Tourneur, believing they distracted from the actors’ faces.



It got amorous at the Tory conference.

## EQUALS

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 12 | DVD/download/VOD

▶ **In this dystopia**, people’s ability to feel emotion is “switched off” before they’re born. Nicholas Hoult and Kristen Stewart slowly realise they’re sufferers of “switched on syndrome” – where emotions start to reassert themselves – and, yep, fall in love.

The film’s style matches its subject matter: slow pace; reserved, restrained feel. This works well, but means you never quite feel connected with the characters, making this a difficult film to like.

▶ **Extras** Commentary; three featurettes. **Rhian Drinkwater**



Warning: contains Noel Fielding.

## SET THE THAMES ON FIRE

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 15 | DVD

▶ **In a near-future London**, the Thames is eating into the decaying city as pianist Art and friend Sal wander its streets, dreaming of a life in sunny Egypt.

There’s not much more plot to spoil in director Ben Charles Edwards’s decadent, Gilliam-influenced, *Withnail & I*-riffing fairytale. While easy on the eye (the production design and cinematography have a sleazy richness to them), there’s a fatal lack of story.

▶ **Extras** Bloopers; five deleted scenes; trailer. **Steve O’Brien**



“Bollocks to this. I wanted a gun.”

## ABATTOIR

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ **A real estate journo** who longs to cover the crime beat gets her chance when her family is brutally murdered. Researching the killings takes her to a nightmarish town that’s made a deal with the devil...

Saw franchise alum Darren Lynn Bousman chucks in all kinds of clashing influences – a bit of neo-noir, a dash of MR James, plus a pinch of grimy mid-’00s torture porn – but somehow, through sheer enthusiasm, it works. Messy, yes, but enjoyably creepy anyway.

▶ **Extras** Commentary; Making Of. **Sarah Dobbs**



“Why oh why did I buy this soap?!”

## OBSERVANCE

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2016 | 15 | DVD

▶ **When we meet PI Parker**, he’s holed up in a crappy apartment, on a patience-testing job staking out a mysterious blonde. He’s not even told why.

That’s not the only question though – what’s the jar of black slime in his room? Why the weird dreams? And what’s that wound that’s appeared on his back? The symbolism may be heavy-handed, but this Polanski-inspired expressionist horror will leave you satisfyingly unsettled.

▶ **Extras** A very short featurette; trailer. **Steve O’Brien**



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## HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Derek got it all wrong on his first day at the law firm.



## IT The Clown War

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED OUT NOW!**  
 1990 | 15 | Blu-ray  
 Director Tommy Lee Wallace  
 Cast Richard Thomas, Dennis Christopher, Annette O'Toole, John Ritter

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** What with a big-screen remake in post-production and the popularity of the similarly-flavoured *Stranger Things*, it's high time for *It* to go HD. This Blu-ray restores the two-part miniseries' 4:3 ratio (previous DVDs were cropped to widescreen), but retains an edit to make it into one long feature.

Based on Stephen King's 1986 novel, it features Tim Curry as the titular entity, a child-snatching, shapeshifting master of illusion that mostly appears as a creepy clown. In 1960 a bunch of misfit kids banish It; when it reappears 30 years on, they must reassemble.

The surprising thing about *It* is how little there is to it, due to the two-part structure's repetitive nature. Much of the first half's taken up introducing the seven "Losers' Club" kids; swathes of the second are spent reintroducing them as adults. In both time periods, the big showdown gets scant screen-time.

But this is a strength as much as a weakness, giving a strong ensemble cast featuring familiar faces – John-Boy Walton, a Lana Lang, *Buffy's* Oz – time to breathe life into the characters, whose bonding is touching twice over. And as Pennywise the clown, Tim Curry is enjoyably off-the-leash.

**Extras** An old 2002 commentary by the director and four of the cast.

Ian Berriman

**i** The sewer scenes were filmed in a rusty old steel mill. The cast had to be careful what they touched in case they got tetanus.

## STAR WARS REBELS Season Two Not just for younglings

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★  
**RELEASED OUT NOW!**  
 2015-2016 | PG | Blu-ray/DVD  
 Creators Simon Kinberg, Dave Filoni, Carrie Beck  
 Cast Taylor Gray, Freddie Prinze Jr, Vanessa Marshall, Tiya Sircar

**◆ If you'd dismissed CG show** *Star Wars Rebels* as the kids'-only arm of that galaxy far, far away, you've made a big mistake – the *Episode IV* prequel series has evolved into the Lucasfilm empire's geekiest, most fan-centric piece of storytelling. This is an essential part of the *Star Wars* mythos that fills in gap gaps in the canon as it explains how small Rebel cells grew into a fully-fledged Alliance. The Rebellion

didn't appear from nowhere, and season two goes deeper into the ship-stealing, Force training and unpleasant Imperial entanglements that will one day give Luke Skywalker a shot at blowing up a Death Star.

But while it's packed with satisfying nods to the movies (Princess Leia!), the *Clone Wars* TV show (Captain Rex!) and more obscure areas of Expanded Universe lore (ever wondered about the origin of B-wings?), crucially *Rebels'* second season never forgets that *Star Wars* should first and foremost be about adventure and excitement. With only a couple of these 22 episodes falling short of a very high bar, it's fun, funny and goes to some



The sponsored walk was undertaken in a tense silence.

surprisingly dark places. Plus, season two wheels out Darth Vader as its Big Bad – what more could you want?

**Extras** The DVD comes with fun, info-packed "Rebel Recons" recaps for each episode (six-seven minutes a piece, and also available on the *Star Wars* YouTube channel) featuring behind-the-scenes material and cast/crew interviews. There's also a

"Connecting The Galaxy" guide to Easter eggs and hidden references that feels rather too brief at just three minutes long. The Blu-ray gets an extra featurette where showrunner Dave Filoni discusses Ahsoka Tano's climactic face-off with her old master, Vader.

Richard Edwards

**i** The emblem of *Clone Wars/Rebels* pirate Hondo Ohnaka's gang appears on Maz Kanata's castle in *The Force Awakens*.





Hallucinating Ollie gripped the bottle.

## BURNT OFFERINGS

Rental health problems

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 17 OCTOBER**

1976 | 15 | Blu-ray & DVD (dual format)

▶ Director Dan Curtis

▶ Cast Karen Black, Oliver Reed, Lee Montgomery, Bette Davis

◆ **Dan Curtis, creator of** gothic soap *Dark Shadows*, brings us a different kind of vampire in this overlooked horror: an old mansion that feeds on the life force of its occupants. That's bad news for the Rolf family, who rent the place one summer.

As this family of three is gradually torn apart, with mum (Karen Black) increasingly obsessive and dad (Oliver Reed) inexplicably aggressive to their young son, the film often feels like a precursor to *The Shining* – especially since Reed's twitchy crack-up acting rivals Jack Nicholson's. No wonder the original novel is recommended in Stephen King's *Danse Macabre*.

At a stretch you could read it as a critique of our modern-day obsession with property. But it also works just fine as a doom-laden gothic chiller with an effective shock ending.

◆ **Extras** Interviews with two cast and writer William F Nolan (47 minutes) provide interesting anecdotes about Oliver Reed (whose entourage got child actor Lee Montgomery drunk!) and co-star Bette Davis. An old commentary by Curtis, Nolan and Black is backed up by a somewhat rambling one by *Video Watchdog* writer Richard Harland Smith. Plus: gallery; trailer; booklet. **Ian Berriman**

i The same house – Dunsuir House in Oakland, California – was later used as the mausoleum in 1979 horror *Phantasm*.



Sadly there are no laundrettes in the future.

## LOGAN'S RUN

Exit Sandman

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1976 | 12 | Blu-ray & DVD (dual format)

▶ Director Michael Anderson

▶ Cast Michael York, Jenny Agutter, Richard Jordan, Peter Ustinov

**BLU-RAY DEBUT** Based on a novel co-written by William F Nolan (who also co-scripted *Burnt Offerings* – look left!), *Logan's Run* is a dystopia in the vein of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* rather than George Orwell's 1984.

It's set in a post-apocalyptic world of care-free abundance, where automation meets all material needs, reproduction is artificial, and casual sex is freely enjoyed. One snag: when you hit 30 you must submit for destruction, with the promise of "renewal".

It's a lie of course, as Michael York's "Sandman" discovers when sent to find and destroy "Sanctuary", where many of the "Runners" it's his job to eliminate

“As shallow as its central characters”

have escaped to. Jenny Agutter's Jessica joins him on the lam, providing a budding romance.

Mentioning *Logan's Run* in the same breath as Huxley and Orwell feels faintly improper, since it's as shallow as its two naive, know-nothing central characters. It also sags a little in the middle, as it becomes a chase through industrial locations. But either side there's delicious eye-candy to be enjoyed, from the rebirth ritual of Carousel to the matte-painting-assisted vistas of Outside, where Washington landmarks have been reclaimed by nature.

◆ **Extras** Commentary by York, the director and the costume designer is carried over from the old DVD, as is a period Making Of. You also get four art cards. This is one of 10 releases in the new HMV-exclusive Premium Collection range. Others of note include *Them!*, *The Omega Man* and *Soylent Green* – all making their UK Blu-ray debut. Sadly these titles were announced so late in the day that we could only squeeze in a review of one. **Ian Berriman**

i A sequence where York and Agutter pose nude for an ice sculpture was one of several trimmed to ensure a US PG rating.

## (ROUND UP)



Look out! There's a veritable avalanche of TV box sets this month! The key one for luddites:

**DAREDEVIL SEASON ONE** (OUT NOW, Blu-ray/DVD). Netflix's gritty, hard-as-nails take on blind lawyer/vigilante Matt Murdock gives gangster politics a Marvel makeover. Beautifully crafted, with a magnificent cast, it's psychologically sophisticated, giving even Vincent D'Onofrio's brutish villain Kingpin relatable motivation.

Elsewhere **PENNY**

**DREADFUL SEASON THREE** (24 October, Blu-ray/DVD) sees the end of Sky's surprisingly kooky supernatural saga.

Bringing in none other than Dracula himself was a gamble, but it pays off, and some Wild West action with werewolf Ethan is welcome (even if it was actually shot in Spain – shh). Eva Green – as always – steals the show as the haunted Vanessa Ives.

**SUPERNATURAL SEASON ELEVEN** (OUT NOW,

Blu-ray/DVD) contains one of the show's finest hours: the episode "Baby", filmed entirely from – of all things – the POV of the Winchester brothers' car. The rest of the season isn't bad, either; *Supernatural* is maturing like a fine (blood) wine. It's just a shame this year's Big Bad is a more of a Small Kind Of Meh. And that's only the tip of the iceberg – hang on, we're mixing our metaphors now, aren't we?

**Soz. THE 100 SEASON THREE** and **DARK**

**MATTER SEASON TWO**

are out now, while 17

October brings **GRIMM**

**SEASON FIVE** and **THE**

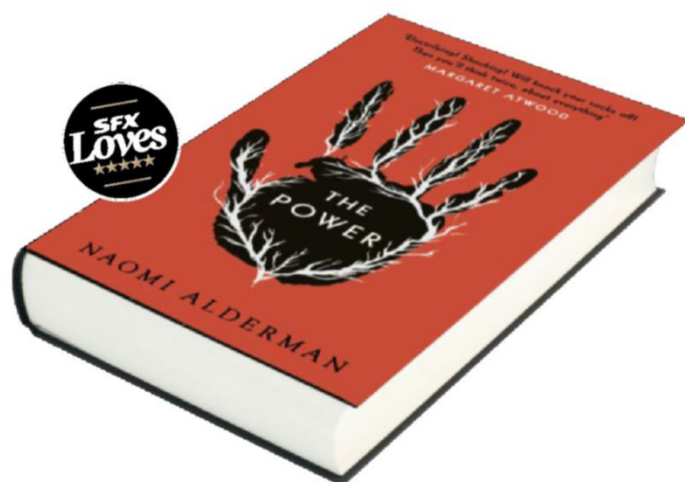
**ORIGINALS SEASON**

**THREE**, with **THE**

**VAMPIRE DIARIES**

**SEASON SEVEN** following on 24 October. **Phew!**





## THE POWER

When It Changed

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 27 OCTOBER**

352 pages | Hardback/ebook

► Author Naomi Alderman

► Publisher Viking

Science fiction and fantasy stories have been used to imagine different constructions of gendered identity, and different configurations of gender relations, since at least as far back as Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's "Sultana's Dream" (1905). The best of these – by the likes of Joanna Russ and James Tiptree Jr, or more recently Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army* – are uncomfortably and deliberately thought-provoking reads, shot through with unforgiving violence and with sharp, ugly challenges to our basic assumptions about how the world works. So when we say that *The Power* is profoundly disturbing and you may well want to argue with it as you read, we mean that in a good way.

The novel starts small. In the very near future – or, perhaps, an alternate version of the present – we see a series of teenage girls in different parts of the world facing down violence with a newly-developed superpower: the ability

to generate and channel electricity within their bodies, via a brand new bodily organ, the "skein". One scares off an attempted rapist with a serious electric shock; another stops the heart of an abusive adoptive father. Initially, it's heady stuff watching arrogant abusers abruptly discover that their victims are a lot less helpless than they thought. But Naomi Alderman soon pulls back her story's focus to show us that the personal remains political. While the power's early use is localised and defensive, it soon spreads, and its consequences can't be ignored. Women suddenly, and more or less universally, having a greater inherent capacity for violence than men means that the world is fundamentally changed, even if parts of it are reluctant to realise that.

At its heart, the tale is an exploration of power in general:

“It may sound grim and dour, but it isn't”

who wields it, how it changes them, and how it shapes both individual lives and wider societies. Over the course of the novel – divided into sections that are, ominously, counting down to something unknown – Alderman traces the changing balance of power in everything from intimate relationships to geopolitics, exposing difficult truths about how real-world hierarchies are enforced and what people (whether men or women) will do, if they can. She does this through a variety of characters around the world, each trying to use the power to their private and public advantage with varying degrees of success. Some are more sympathetic than others, but all are well realised and plausible in the often destructive choices they make. Women like runaway Allie and mob daughter Roxy find security in violence, and swear to never be victims again; others, like politician Margot, are rewarded for it by institutions that value aggression. Meanwhile men, like journalist Tunde, learn horrible lessons like what it is to fear walking alone at night, and how to flatter and appease the female friends and colleagues they must increasingly rely upon for protection and advancement.

All this may make it sound like *The Power* is an unrelentingly grim and dour book, but it isn't. Yes, there's quite a lot of grim; a relationship that would in most books be a bright spot, a happy ending, is rendered pretty disturbing by the diminishing space around it for any sort of connection between women and men that isn't built in some measure on dominance and fear. But there's also plenty of humour to be found, whether in the sardonic asides of the voice in Ally's head (which may or may not be divine), or the sly framing narrative that positions the novel as a work written by someone in the far future seeking to understand events, and finding that no one really believes men could have once run the world...

Nic Clarke

**i** Alderman's previous books include *Doctor Who* tie-in *Borrowed Time*. She used to be able to recite every companion in order!



## A HEAD FULL OF GHOSTS

Playing Merry hell

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

400 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author Paul Tremblay

► Publisher Titan Books

Take one adolescent girl, add some blasphemy and sexual deviance, and top it all off with lashings of pea soup. The tropes of demonic possession stories are so well-worn now you'd think no one could ever make them scary again. But Paul Tremblay might just have managed it.

His novel embraces the clichés, using their very familiarity to, paradoxically, manufacture an atmosphere of dread and uncertainty. Here, pop culture is just another force for evil, and nothing is quite what it seems.

Fifteen years ago, Merry's older sister was taken ill – mood changes, green vomit, the works. While the girls' mother suspected schizophrenia, their father called a priest. And the priest called a TV network. Before they knew it, the family were at the centre of a controversial TV show. Now, retelling her story to a biographer, Merry must battle to separate her childhood memories from what she's seen on TV, in an attempt to find out what really happened to her sister.

Tremblay piles on the layers of ambiguity to craft a story that's a joy to unpick. And its final sting is guaranteed to keep you up at night. **Sarah Dobbs**

**i** This book is dedicated to author Shirley Jackson. Our Book Club on p40 may give some clues as to why...





## THE HIDDEN PEOPLE

Away with the fairies



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

384 pages | Hardback/ebook

► Author Alison Littlewood

► Publisher Jo Fletcher Books

❖ **Think fairytales are all** about Disney princesses and true love's kisses? Think again. Alison Littlewood's creepy new novel harks back to a time when fairytales were terrifying. Here, there's nothing good about "the good folk", and even telling stories about them can have deadly consequences.

Narrator Albie Mirrals is an upright London gentleman who scoffs at superstition... until his cousin is killed by fairy-fearing villagers. Determined to repair the damage to her memory, he travels to her hometown to investigate. Once there, though, his rational worldview starts to wobble. Could the villagers be right? Was Lizzie a changeling? Or is there something even nastier going on?

Littlewood expertly weaves themes of mythology and misogyny into a psychological page-turner that feels both familiar and fresh. It doesn't take much effort to spot its literary influences (one character even pulls out a copy of *Wuthering Heights*!) but there's an undeniably modern edge to the storytelling.

Hypnotic and intelligent, with buckets of atmosphere, this is a fairytale so dark that no amount of cheery singing woodland creatures could magic up a happy ending. **Sarah Dobbs**

**i** Littlewood cites Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1922 book *The Coming Of The Fairies* as one of her influences.



## SAVANT

Bureaucracy gone berserk



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

354 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author Nik Abnett

► Publisher Solaris

❖ **Procedures and protocols** exist for perfectly sound reasons; any big organisation would grind to a halt if it had to reinvent the wheel for each new case. But knowing that doesn't stop the sound of a customer-service script being recited down the phone feeling vaguely Kafkaesque.

In an SF setting, these frustrations can become art. When a chance (perhaps) observation and a student's confusion trigger enhanced surveillance from the faceless overseers of Service, the bureaucratic nightmare in which maths professor Tobe and his assistant Metoo become embroiled has shades of Douglas Adams or Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*. While this novel never reaches the absurdist heights of either of those, there's plenty of amusement and a certain ghoulish fascination on offer in its picture of a system that fails to understand or account for human behaviour.

The prose style is infodumpy to an off-putting degree – deliberately apeing, perhaps, the nuance-free system it's evoking – but watching this train come off the rails under the pressure of its own logical-illogic is bizarrely compelling, page-turning stuff, even if Nik Abnett doesn't quite stick the landing. **Nic Clarke**

**i** Yep, Nik Abnett's husband is Dan Abnett; they've previously collaborated on several *Warhammer* novels.

Ludo's foam face takes shape in the hands of the Creature Shop's Stuart Robinson.



## LABYRINTH: THE ULTIMATE VISUAL HISTORY

A-maze-ing artistry



► **RELEASED 21 OCTOBER**

192 pages | Hardback

► Authors Paula M Block,

Terry J Erdmann

► Publisher Titan Books

❖ **It may not have set the box** office alight back in 1986, but *Labyrinth*'s unlikely mix of David Bowie, teenage rebellion and puppets has made sure it's fondly remembered. This stunning book is a must for anyone who's ever loved getting lost in Jim Henson's eponymous maze.

As a history it's brilliant, covering everything from the movie's origins – it was artist Brian Froud who suggested "goblins" as a subject – to the development of the characters, and turning an MC Escher painting into a three-dimensional set. With the exceptions of Henson and Bowie, pretty much all the key players reminisce, while there's plenty of wonderful trivia – like the fact the baby was supposed to be called



Freddie, but it was switched to Toby because young Toby Froud wouldn't respond to anything else.

Words aside, this is simply a beautiful thing to own. It's a tactile experience, packed with wonderful archive pictures and recreations of fun ephemera like storyboards, annotated scripts and – most interestingly – memos from Henson that give a sense of the man and his process. An email just doesn't have quite the same romance... **Richard Edwards**

**i** *Labyrinth* baby Toby Froud (son of artist Brian) now has his own production company – Stripey Pajama Productions.



# Space may be vast...

'Joyously written and a joy to read'  
Claire North

'A quietly profound, humane  
tour de force' *Guardian*

'Great fun!' Ann Leckie

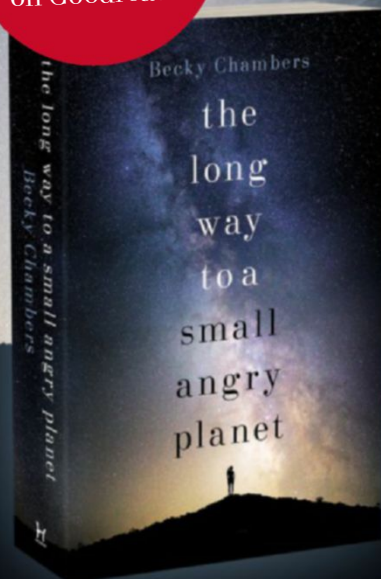
'A joyous, optimistic space opera'  
*Tor.com*

Shortlisted for the  
Arthur C. Clarke Award

Shortlisted for  
The Kitschies Golden Tentacle

Longlisted for the  
Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction

3,500  
five star ratings  
on Goodreads



The beloved debut novel



## POTTERMORE PRESENTS

The wizarding world explored



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

63 pages/79 pages/68 pages | Ebook

► Editor JK Rowling

► Publisher Pottermore

► **Only available in ebook form,** these three slim volumes (*Short Stories From Hogwarts Of Power, Politics And Pesky Poltergeists*; *Hogwarts: An Incomplete And Unreliable Guide*; and *Short Stories From Hogwarts Of Heroism, Hardship And Dangerous Hobbies*) are a collection of stories, ideas and background information taken from JK Rowling's Pottermore website. Which means that if you're a member there, you've probably read most of these already. Sure, there's some new stuff – although we can't imagine many fans have been itching to find out Horace Slughorn's backstory – but, by and large, these books have, in the worlds of the Pottermore website editor, been "sewn together" from existing material... not all of it penned by Rowling herself.

Are they worth it? Well, they're only a couple of quid each and they're presented nicely enough. And frankly, if you're a *Potter* nut, it'll save you scouring the internet every time you want to check up on what kind of wand Remus

Lupin uses. Plus there's no denying that if you *haven't* spent time on the site, the information here is intriguing – the aforementioned Lupin's tragic backstory answers a few questions about why he came to Hogwarts, for example, and the history of the Hogwarts Express is amusing (it was stolen from Muggles!). Without a doubt, the most unmissable inclusion is the chapter about Minerva McGonagall; you'll never look at Maggie Smith's movie version in the same way again.

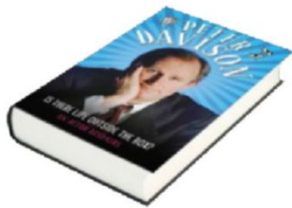
There are a few disappointments, such as the fact that the piece on Time-Turners doesn't mention *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* – given that these books were released *after* the premiere of the play (which uses Time-Turners as a central plot point), that seems a quite serious oversight. More illustrations might have been nice, too, to liven up a serious amount of white space. Still, the end result is fun, friendly... and largely essential. **Jayne Nelson**



**i** The first Muggle-born Minister for Magic, Nobby Leach, was suspected of fixing England's 1966 World Cup win.



# Reviews



## IS THERE LIFE OUTSIDE THE BOX?

It's not just cricket



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

288 pages | Hardback

► Author Peter Davison

► Publisher John Blake Publishing

❖ **A genuine TV star but** never a chat show fixture or tabloid target, Peter Davison always felt too private, too understated, too *British* for an autobiography. The subtlest Doctor Who, he had none of the outsize charisma of Jon Pertwee or Tom Baker – and, you suspected, none of the tall tales and showboating anecdotes that powered his predecessors' memoirs.

"I've ambled through my career," he confesses, remembering the fragile chain of luck that took him from a guitar-strumming, ambition-free existence in kaftan and beads to a golden spell as the unofficial face of the BBC in the early '80s. He's the product of South London suburbia but this is, you realise, a life less ordinary: his father, fascinatingly, was a mixed-race West Indian, gold-toothed and flirtatious.

It's a wry, engaging, often killingly funny read, with a winning line in self-deprecation. And while you won't be short-changed by the *Doctor Who* bits (there's an eye-opening insight into a Pertwee-Baker ego-clash at a US convention), Davison's life beyond the TARDIS is just as worthy of your time. **Nick Setchfield**

**i** Once an aspiring songwriter, Davison had his song "Officer McKirk" covered by Dave Clark. Find it on YouTube.

## BULLET TIME A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



## STAR WARS: COMPLETE LOCATIONS

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

188 pages | Hardback

► Authors Various

► Publisher DK

● First compiled in 2005, this has now had an *Episode VII* update.

● In the grand old tradition of *Eagle*, it's full of cutaways which take the roof off, say, the Lars Homestead or Jabba's Throne Room.

● The artwork (by three different artists) is beautifully detailed.

● The 18 new pages include eight new artworks of *Force Awakens* locations.

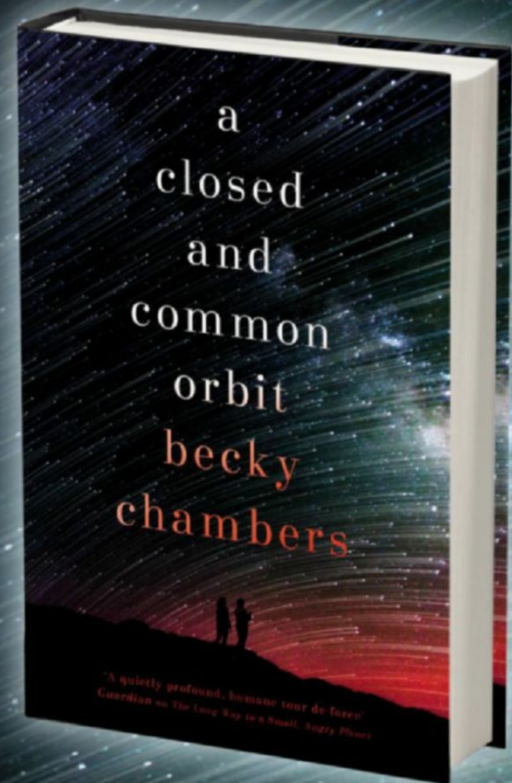
● That's a map of Jakku, the derelict Walker Rey calls home, Maz's Castle, the Resistance Base and three views of Starkiller Base.

● Captions provide extra snippets of lore: like the fact that the Resistance Base has a memorial wall for fallen comrades, or that Rey wove her own hammock. Fancy that!

● Also recently updated: DK's *Star Wars: Year By Year*.



...but it's anything  
but empty



The stand-alone sequel  
Out now



Never afraid to be out of this world

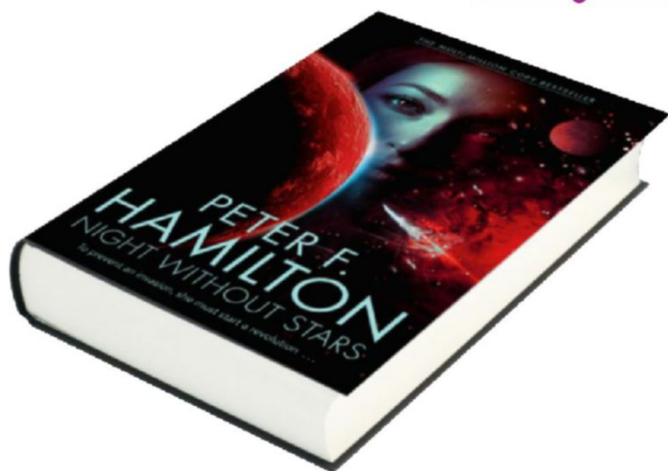
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## BOOKS



## NIGHT WITHOUT STARS

Curtain falls on *The Fallers*

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

768 pages | Hardback/ebook

▶ Author **Peter F Hamilton**

▶ Publisher **Macmillan**

❖ **There are times when** franchises become too packed with stories. Think of the pre-reboot *Trek* or – please don't write in – the way the mythical has started to overtake any human-sized drama in *Doctor Who*. With this second, concluding instalment of the *Chronicle Of The Fallers*, Peter F Hamilton's *Commonwealth* sequence may just be reaching a point where it's similarly full.

That's more of an observation than a criticism by the way, because this is a fine book, the kind of epic space opera that Hamilton seems somehow to turn out effortlessly. Picking up from events in *The Abyss Beyond Dreams* some years down the line, it details a crisis on Bienvenido,

a planet where the human population is threatened by Fallers – shapeshifting aliens – but is millions of light years from assistance. Worse, the shapeshifter apocalypse is nigh...

Or is it? While Bienvenido's technology base is limited and its authoritarian government somewhere between misguided and corrupt, a mysterious figure known as the Warrior Angel is able to bring Commonwealth technology to bear against the aliens. Then a spacecraft crashlands on the planet carrying a baby. This is no ordinary child, though, but someone who can save this distant outpost of humanity.

We don't want to say too much more for fear of too many spoilers but, after *The Abyss...* used scientist and industrialist Nigel Sheldon as a central character, this is a child we've met before. And here, at least if Hamilton is to take the *Commonwealth* books forward, may lie a problem. It's not just that this is now a fictional universe stuffed with stories, it's that so many of these tales sit on the shoulders of very few central characters. **Jonathan Wright**

**i** The book's society has a '50s feel – Hamilton "wanted to kill the nostalgia-for-the-rosy-past lie politicians peddle".



## THIN AIR

Grim Peaks

★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

232 pages | Hardback/ebook/audiobook

▶ Author **Michelle Paver**

▶ Publisher **Orion Books**

❖ **This is a slim book, and a simple story, but it has all the elegance of a classic ghost story.**

It's 1935 and, fleeing a broken engagement, Dr Stephen Pearce joins his brother's expedition to the peak of Kangchenjunga (second highest mountain of the Himalayas), following the route of a failed Edwardian expedition that had a tragic end.

Paver's clearly done her research, and nothing seems anachronistic or jarring. From the equipment to the food to the attitude some of the party display towards their sherpas and bearers, it all feels authentic.

Likewise the strained relationship between Stephen and his brother, Kits, rings true. You're never sure whether Stephen is ill with altitude sickness, unbalanced by the change in his personal life and reminders of the earlier tragedy, or whether he's genuinely perceiving something no one else can, while trying to climb one of the world's deadliest peaks. Kangchenjunga is a hostile environment, and a natural disaster feels as imminent as a supernatural threat.

It's a compelling read, building up slowly and effectively, with just one rather sad flaw: when the time comes to deliver a really good scare, it's not nearly frightening enough. **Miriam McDonald**

**i** Aleister Crowley led a failed attempt to climb Kangchenjunga in 1905. It was finally done in 1955.

## REISSUES

Our pick of the paperbacks this month is Adam Roberts'

**THE THING ITSELF**

(★★★★, 13 October, Gollancz).



Centring on two scientists in an Antarctic research station, it connects time-travelling "ghosts", the

birth of an AI and a future "Utopia" via a narrative that hops around in time, with stories from one era finding echoes in others. We said: "a heroic partial success that rises to the challenge that David Mitchell sets down." Fancy something spookily David Lynch-ian? In Keith Lee Morris's **TRAVELERS REST** (★★★★, 13 October, Weidenfeld & Nicolson), a family check into a



small-town motel, then become trapped in its limbo-like corridors. We said: "The prose

has a hypnotic rhythm that perfectly captures the uncanny ambience... An ultimately rewarding, if sometimes arduous, journey." Finally, the latest entry in the SF

Masterworks range is Maureen F McHugh's 1992 debut **CHINA MOUNTAIN ZHANG** (13 October,



Gollancz), which was nominated for both the Hugo and the Nebula Awards. Set in a Chinese-

dominated 22nd century where the US has undergone a Communist revolution, it's a mosaic novel that switches between a young man of mixed Chinese/Latino ancestry (who is secretly gay) and the lives of four other characters. A quiet, small-scale story set in a well-drawn world, it's a coming-of-age tale of sorts – but not that of a special "chosen one", just an ordinary person trying to find their place in society.



# Reviews



## THE RISE OF IO

Slumdog Alien Time-share



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

424 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author Wesley Chu

► Publisher Angry Robot

◆ **Having given us the *Lives*, *Deaths* and *Rebirths Of Tao*,** Wesley Chu returns to the world of that trilogy for *The Distant Associates Of Tao*. Tao, for the uninitiated, is one of a number of disembodied aliens – the Quasing – who've been stranded on Earth for millennia, secretly sharing human bodies, trying to encourage our race to develop technologically through constant conflict.

This new trilogy features a new Quasing, Io, a new host, Ella, and a new dynamic: the Indian street rat from a near-future slum and the haughty alien who hijacks her body practically loathe each other. As Io tries to train Ella to be a good host, the evil Quasing – the Genjix – have plans to take over the Indian government and level the slum, to replace it with... something not good.

What makes the book is Ella – a spunky but believably flawed character – and her entertainingly sarky exchanges with her backseat driver. There are some fan-pleasing links to the previous trilogy, boo-hiss villains and plenty of twists. All of which help to disguise a whiff of familiarity about the whole thing, and the fact that – being about 50 pages too long for the plot – it sags at times.

**Dave Golder**

**i** During a brief thespian career, Chu once appeared in a Hanes underwear advert with Michael Jordan.



## EVERYTHING BELONGS TO THE FUTURE

Prosper and live long



► **RELEASED 18 OCTOBER**

114 pages | Paperback/ebook

► Author Laurie Penny

► Publisher Tor.com

◆ **In John Wyndham's *Trouble With Lichen*,** a chemical's discovered that prolongs human lifespan; the scientist gives it to (well off) women to enable them to live longer lives and therefore do more than simply marry and raise children.

In this novella, another fungus provides the "fix" that extends life, but the focus is more on the political implications of the discovery: rich families stay young for decades longer, while the poor see no benefits. Undercover investigator Alex is embedded with a group of activists committed to spreading the benefits of the fix a little more widely, but a chance encounter with the forever-14 creator of the drug leads to potentially deadly possibilities.

It's not all class warfare and activism though, with trans erasure, the ethics of deceitful relationships and more all making an appearance. This is a skilfully told story doing what SF does best – examining the social consequences of scientific discoveries – but it never quite hits the mark, with the righteous anger at times overwhelming the story and characters. **Rhian Drinkwater**

**i** Penny's persona on her old blog, Penny Red, was inspired by Yelena Rossini, from the comic *Transmetropolitan*.

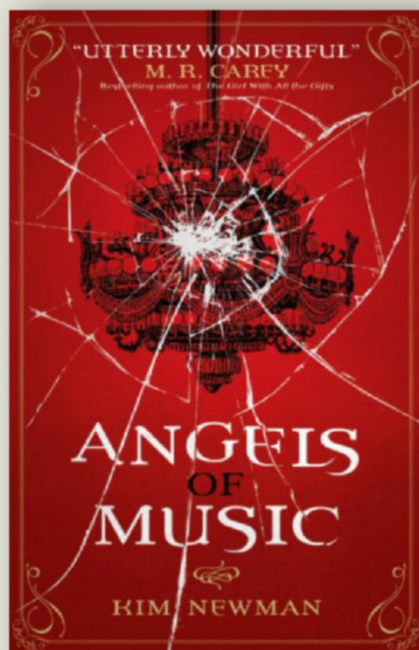
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## BOOKS



### SOMETHING IN THE BLOOD

Wham, fang, thank you Bram



► **RELEASED 28 OCTOBER**

672 pages | Hardback/audiobook

► Author David J Skal

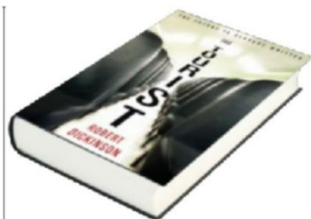
► Publisher Liveright Publishing

❖ **Too much rich food late one** night caused the nightmare that inspired Bram Stoker to write *Dracula*, it's said. Nocturnal nibblers may be relieved, then, to read in this substantial biography that although Stoker did indeed claim that a gutful of dressed crab gave him the horrors, the story was just "a dab of blarney the writer enjoyed dishing out".

That's the least of the myths of *Dracula*'s creation skewered by David J Skal; the "fact" that Stoker knew anything much about the history of the real-life Vlad Dracul gets impaled too. Skal shows how the Count coalesced in Stoker's unconscious, the product of a sickly youth grown into a sexually conflicted Victorian theatre manager.

Stoker's intimate connection to Oscar Wilde looms large, as does the way that his employer, monstrous actor Henry Irving, held him in a near-uncanny thrall. Many less familiar figures make walk-on appearances, though – including Wilde-obsessed novelist George Sylvester Viereck, perhaps the first of Stoker's many imitators. But the 70-plus pages given over to the seven years Stoker spent drafting and redrafting *Dracula* lie at the heart of this highly digestible feast. **Alan Barnes**

**i** Stoker deleted an ending in which, after Drac's death, Castle Dracula destroyed itself (like Poe's House of Usher!).



### THE TOURIST

Temporal tour rep turns PI



► **RELEASED 20 OCTOBER**

283 pages | Hardback/ebook

► Author Robert Dickinson

► Publisher Orbit

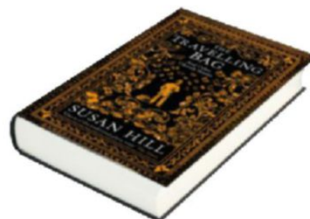
❖ **From "A Sound Of Thunder"** to "Let's Go To Golgotha!", time travel tourism is nothing new in SF fiction. Neither are conspiracy thrillers. Yet Robert Dickinson combines the two in a novel that's as fresh and compelling as it is high concept.

Set in a world in which future tourists can vacation in the past safe in the knowledge they *can't* change history, it centres on a tour rep in the 21st century who becomes an unwilling investigator when one of his clients goes missing. This, of course, spirals into a major temporal mystery, but one that largely avoids the usual irritating paradoxes by keeping its rules of time travel simple.

Packed with dry humour, satirical swipes at the 21st century (the cloud is described as "everything that will be lost") and vivid characters, *The Tourist* also has lots of fun exploring how a culture where time travel is everyday might actually work.

Occasionally the book's habit of feeding you vital world-building details by osmosis – or even keeping them under wraps until late in the day – can make the "mystery" more frustratingly vague than the author clearly intends, but these are minor irritations in an otherwise immensely enjoyable read. **Dave Golder**

**i** Robert Dickinson came up with the basic idea after a dream that involved travelling back to Paris in the '60s.



### THE TRAVELLING BAG

From Hill



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

183 pages | Hardback/ebook

► Author Susan Hill

► Publisher Profile Books

❖ **In the mood for some** old-fashioned ghost stories, the sort best enjoyed in front of a roaring fire on a cold winter's night, perhaps with a large glass of brandy in one hand? Then *The Woman In Black* author Susan Hill's latest collection might be, ahem, just your bag.

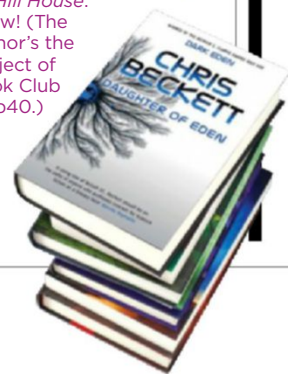
That's particularly true of the titular tale, what with its Victorian gentlemen's club setting and fustily phrased framing. Concerning a vengeful prank gone wrong, there's something charmingly fogeyish about it, though the central premise makes precious little sense.

Haunting tale "Boy Number Twenty-One" moves in the same social sphere – a boarding school, a stately home – and evokes a similar sensation of mild disquiet. Best of the bunch is "Alice Baker", which draws on that modern-day situation of the temp you never quite get to know. Both this and stepmother-from-hell story "The Final Room" rely on strange smells and an indefinable sense that something is somehow off. The result is an unshowy collection that, though unlikely to leave you fearfully pulling your bedclothes up under your chin, clammy with fear, has a nice line in quietly understated uncanny. **Ian Berriman**

**i** "Number Twenty-One" was inspired by a teacher who went up the Eiffel Tower with 22 boys, and came down with 23...

## ALSO OUT

A frankly insane number of book releases this month means there are a few interesting titles we couldn't fit in. They include the lavish, three-volume, far-too-nice-for-journalists-to-afford **STAR WARS ART: RALPH MCGUARRIE** (out now, Abrams) – head to p72 for a flavour of the delights within. We should also flag up **DAUGHTER OF EDEN** (out now, Corvus), book three in Chris Beckett's award-winning *Dark Eden* series – check out an interview with him on p82 – and **GOLDENHAND** (out now, Hot Key Books), Garth Nix's latest *Old Kingdom* book. Then there's James P Smythe's latest slice of post-apocalyptic YA, **DARK MADE DAWN** (out now, Hodder & Stoughton), which concludes his Clarke Award-nominated *Australia Trilogy*. Hang on... do you hear jingling? Oh god, it can't be sleigh bells can it? Yes it can. Illustrated *Doctor Who* story collection **TWELVE DOCTORS OF CHRISTMAS** (out now, BBC Children's Books) is upon us, so expect to hear Slade blaring out in Asda any day now. Finally, here's three non-fiction titles well worth a look: **GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PAN'S LABYRINTH** (21 October, Titan) looks back at the director's 2006 dark fairy tale; **THE ART AND MAKING OF THE FLASH** (21 October, Titan) reveals production art and behind-the-scenes shots from the super-show; and **SHIRLEY JACKSON: A RATHER HAUNTED LIFE** (25 October, Liveright) documents the tumultuous life of the horror author behind the likes of *The Haunting Of Hill House*. Phew! (The author's the subject of Book Club on p40.)







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## HARLEY QUINN

### Suicide Squad's bad girl reborn



★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **DC Comics**  
 ► Writers **Amanda Conner,**  
**Jimmy Palmiotti**  
 ► Artist **Chad Hardin**

**ISSUES 1-3** **Riding *Suicide Squad's***

success wave (yes, it might have received bad reviews, but plenty of people saw that movie), issue one of *Harley Quinn* had an astonishing 400,000 advance orders before it hit shelves. So, what with DC recently giving Harley a risky Margot Robbie-matching makeover, it's lucky the comic is so good – its first three issues are arguably the best of the *Rebirth* rebrand.

The book's got a tough job to do, as the comic version of Quinn is radically different to the movie take, and surprisingly complicated.

In the New 52 universe, she lives in Coney Island with a large cast of weirdo friends, and has a (sweet) relationship with Poison Ivy. Surprisingly, despite the opportunity for a full reboot, *Rebirth's* Harley keeps all of those elements, presenting an elaborate “previously on”-style explanation, before gradually moving into a new set-up.

The plot is typically wacky, with a cow-befriending alien accidentally (and hilariously) punishing the meat-eaters of Coney Island via zombies, and Harley having to turn hero to protect her friends. It's not the most original high-concept we've ever wide-eyed chuckled at, but writers Conner and Palmiotti fit so many fantastic elements into that framework, we shouldn't be too begrudging with praise.

Issue one is an exposition-heavy issue, but it's done so smartly and with such a strong sense of fun that long-term fans won't mind, and new readers will become instantly addicted. They're rewarded with an action-packed second issue (containing a killer cliffhanger), and a super-satisfying third issue final chapter for the opening arc, making this the best complete story in the *Rebirth* universe so far.

Character work is strong. Despite 2016's fairly radical visual makeover, Harley's vivid/layered personality is untouched. She remains a bad girl with a huge heart and a funny-bone of steel; edgy, sweet and ridiculously

“The best story in the *Rebirth* universe so far”

entertaining. And one of the best elements of the New 52 take, Harley's relationship with Poison Ivy, isn't just retained for *Rebirth*, it's improved upon, with these three issues containing series-high sweet moments.

Quinn's (relatively new) love interest, Red Tool (yes, that's a deliberate play on Deadpool) is also included, and he's good fun, but if the DCEU are looking for someone to shove into *Suicide Squad 2*, we'd take this book's version of Ivy any day of the week.

Funny, action-stuffed, with gorgeous art and beautiful character moments, this is an essential purchase – whether you liked *Suicide Squad* or not.

**Sam Ashurst**

**i** Harley Quinn creator Paul Dini was partly inspired by his friend Arlene Sarkin playing a jester in soap *Days Of Our Lives*.



Two or three shades of grey.

## GHOST STORIES OF AN ANTIQUARY

Monty Drawn

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 27 OCTOBER**

► Publisher **Self Made Hero**  
 ► Writers **Leah Moore, John Reppion**  
 ► Artists **Aneke, Kit Buss, Fouad Mezher, Alisdair Wood**

**GRAPHIC NOVEL** **MR James's**

tales of supernatural terror, with their ambiguity and focus on peculiar, arresting images, have inspired many great visualisations, and that tradition continues with a volume of new comic strip versions. Just in time for the Christmas market.

Leah Moore and John Reppion keep their adaptations very spare – this book relates four stories, each with a different artist, in just 56 pages – but the tone and mood are carefully preserved.

Alisdair Wood shows hardly anything in a fine retelling of “The Ash-tree”, but the vile spider-like creatures are a great touch. The first manifestation of the creature in “Canon Alberic's Scrap-book” is superbly handled by Aneke (though the second doesn't quite live up to it), and the children of “Lost Hearts” are gruesomely rendered by Kit Buss. The best tale is “The Mezzotint”: Fouad Mezher's thick, dark lines take one of James's oddest stories, in which the horror is at one remove, and make it creepily vivid.

This being volume one it's safe to assume more adaptations are planned. Here's hoping they do the lot. **Eddie Robson**

**i** A movie of “Casting The Runes” directed by Joe Dante was announced in 2013, but all's gone quiet since.







Rassilon: has to stoop in old pubs.

## DOCTOR WHO: SUPREMACY OF THE CYBERMEN

No silver lining?



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Titan Comics

► Writers George Mann, Cavan Scott

► Artists Ivan Rodriguez, Walter

Geovanni, Alessandro Vitti

**ISSUES 1-3** Last year's big *Four*

*Doctors* event was a roaring success for Titan's *Doctor Who* line, so it's no surprise they're giving it another try. Multi-*Doctor* extravaganzas are always an attention-grabber, but unfortunately this year's five-issue event miniseries is showcasing some serious flaws.

In the wake of season nine's finale, exiled Time Lord leader Rassilon teams up with the Cybermen to take over Gallifrey. The Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Doctors are soon confronting different elements of the cyber-threat, but the decision to keep them in separate storylines feels haphazard and unfocused.

We're three issues in, and while there are some entertaining moments, it hasn't reached the wit and depth of *Four Doctors*. But the biggest problems come from the art, with many pages feeling rushed and sketchy, and likenesses getting so loose that it's often hard to identify characters (especially a nondescript version of Captain Jack). Despite a great central concept, this is ultimately a disappointing event comic that fails to live up to its predecessor. **Saxon Bullock**

**i** Also recently released by Titan Comics: the first issue of a Third Doctor miniseries written by Paul Cornell.



## STAR WARS: HAN SOLO

Rogue race



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher Marvel

► Writer Marjorie Liu

► Artist Mark Brooks

**ISSUES 1-3** There are few science

fiction characters as iconic as Han Solo, and even his fate in *The Force Awakens* hasn't dented his immense popularity. Now, for those fans getting impatient for 2018's Solo-centric spin-off film, there's a new five-issue Marvel miniseries in which everyone's favourite intergalactic scoundrel gets up to more action-packed shenanigans.

The story follows Han as he's given a mission by the Rebellion to rescue some important informants under the cover of flying the Millennium Falcon in the Dragon Void Run, a notorious racing competition. For Han, the idea of actually *winning* the race is too tempting to miss, but balancing the demands of the mission with his own self-interest isn't easy, and the stakes are soon getting deadly...

We're currently three issues in, and writer Marjorie Liu has crafted a pulpy, fast-paced thrill-ride that showcases strong world-building and enjoyable setpieces. The Dragon Void race is depicted as an imaginative gauntlet of lethal dangers, while Liu gives entertaining dimensions to the cast of rogues and racers that Han is competing against.

Most importantly, her portrayal of Han captures the right blend of heroism and roguish charm. Meanwhile, artist Mark Brooks delivers stylish, expansive visuals. Brooks gives us eye-catching character designs and a couple of visually interesting new aliens, while also switching easily between quiet dialogue sequences and vivid space battles. Lurid and energetic, this is a rousing adventure comic that maintains the high standard already seen across Marvel's other *Star Wars* titles. **Saxon Bullock**

**i** George Lucas apparently liked Mark Brooks's work so much that he's buying all the original art from issues one and two.



At half-time there's a *Doctor Who* clip.

## ROK OF THE REDS

A comic of two halves



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher BHP Comics

► Writers John Wagner, Alan Grant

► Artist Dan Cornwell

**ISSUES 1-3** Originally

developed in the '90s for an anthology that never happened, there's a retro feel to *Rok Of The Reds* that would have seemed old-fashioned even 20 years ago.

Credited to both John Wagner and Alan Grant, the script is actually solely the handiwork of the former, who's expanded but hardly updated the initial treatment that he devised with his one-time regular writing partner.

It centres on bad boy footballer Kyle Dixon, whose fortunes are transformed after he's possessed by renegade alien Rok of Arkadi. This somewhat dour extraterrestrial evokes the malevolent spirit of Wagner and Grant's *Eagle* stalwart Doomlord, although so far the body count is nowhere near as high.

Halfway through the six-issue run, Wagner is still keeping us guessing about Rok's motives, as he forms a bond with his landlord's young son as well as enhancing Kyle's silky skills on the pitch.

With newcomer Dan Cornwell proving equally adept at illustrating frenetic football action as he is at spectacular scenes of intergalactic destruction, *Rok Of The Reds* should appeal to both sci-fi and sports fans alike – so unlike with your favourite team, you really cannot lose. **Stephen Jewell**

**i** In 1985 Wagner and Grant also wrote *Dan Harker's War*, a strip about football hooliganism for *Roy Of The Rovers*.



## METROID PRIME: FEDERATION FORCE

The year's most unwanted game?



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on 3DS

► Publisher Nintendo

**VIDEOGAME** It was, let's face it, a dire miscalculation. Celebrating 30 years of a beloved single-player series renowned for its rich atmosphere and intricate, layered exploration by releasing a multiplayer shooter with linear missions and a chibi art style was never likely to go down well with *Metroid's* passionate, vocal fanbase. This wasn't the comeback anyone imagined – or wanted – and the internet collectively made sure Nintendo knew about it.

It's difficult to ignore the expectations when considering the reality, but if you can set aside

your preconceptions, this isn't a bad game. Though it isn't quite a great one either.

The story begins with the Galactic Federation attempting to keep up with the nefarious activities of those pesky Space Pirates. They've been meddling with some super-sizing tech, so Federation troopers are forced to use giant mechs to make it a fair fight. In truth, the chance is wasted to explore the potential of this increased scale: even the buildings are built to accommodate the larger figure. Only rarely are you forced out of the suit and the difference becomes clear.

It's not the only idea that's underexplored, but the upshot of such restlessness means the 22 missions, each of which supports

up to four players online and off, are versatile and varied. In some, you'll be asked to guard somewhere, while in others you'll push your way through the corridors of Federation and Pirate facilities.

Combat was never really the *Prime* games' main strength, but when things heat up here, the action can be surprisingly intense. When it peaks, *Federation Force* captures a sensation that reminds us of a successful *Destiny* strike. But while some missions are smartly balanced to accommodate different team sizes, elsewhere the quality of your experience will depend massively on how many players are involved.

Ironically, it's those who were most bitterly disappointed by the return that are likely to get the most from *Federation Force*. There are many better co-op multiplayer games available, but with its expansion of the *Metroid* universe more open-minded fans may yet find a place in their hearts to welcome in this modest and occasionally inspired spin-off. **Chris Schilling**

**i** A Change.org petition calling for Nintendo to cancel the game received over 20,000 signatures in the space of two months.



## DOCTOR WHO: THE GENESIS CHAMBER

Going easy on the gothic



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

185 minutes | CD/download

► Publisher Big Finish

**AUDIO DRAMA** The mid-'70s reign of Philip Hinchcliffe as producer of *Doctor Who* has long been seen as one of the high points in the programme's history. Now, two years on from its first Philip Hinchcliffe Presents release, Big Finish has delivered another new Hinchcliffe story, but this one is far from the richly gothic style most fans will be expecting.

Instead, *The Genesis Chamber* is closer in tone to the few purely SF stories he oversaw, like 1977's "The Face Of Evil". The action begins when the Fourth Doctor (Tom Baker) and Leela (Louise Jameson) arrive on a distant colony world where humans are split between a sophisticated technological city and a primitive commune.

Alien forces are manipulating the tensions between the two groups, and the story's initial build-up is effective and intriguing, but the final reveal lacks impact and leaves the story feeling over-stretched at six episodes.

Baker and Jameson are as impressive as ever, and there are strong moments of action and melodrama – it's just a shame *The Genesis Chamber* ends up as a reminder of the Hinchcliffe era's weaknesses as well as its strengths. **Saxon Bullock**

**i** Hinchcliffe outlined the basic story, characters and tone, but the rest was done by Marc Platt ("Ghost Light").



Ten minutes later the neighbours put up a "No Ball Games" sign and the fun was over.





This little lot will set you back about £80.

## THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

No, it's not by Bowie...

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** 28 OCTOBER

(vinyl)/ OUT NOW! (CD)

► Composers John Phillips,

Stomu Yamashta

► Label UMC

**SOUNDTRACK** *The Man Who Fell To Earth* is a strange film, and this soundtrack has an appropriately odd history. Star David Bowie was originally hired to compose it, but the music he created was deemed unusable. The Mamas And The Papas' John Phillips and composer Stomu Yamashta were roped in instead, but what they came up with is hardly your typical soundtrack fare. It's lurked in the vaults unreleased for 40 years.

Over 25 tracks, it's nothing if not diverse. Tracks like Louis Armstrong's "Blueberry Hill" and Holst's "Mars, The Bringer Of War" will be familiar to most. More intriguing are Yamashta's ethereal instrumentals, which alternate between meditative and menacing. Phillips' excursions into groovy library funk are fun too.

There's no forgiving the naff country and western pastiches, though. Director Nicolas Roeg apparently wanted some "twang" on the score, and he gets it, but songs like "Boys From The South" are eminently skippable. Weirdest of all, though curiously likeable, is the title track, which closes the album – a croony bit of easy listening that jars with the film's detached tone. **Will Salmon**

**i** The two LP/two CD deluxe box set comes with a bonus CD, booklet, art cards, the press book and an A4 poster.



She'd lost the Really Big Screwdriver needed to remove the sash and helmet.

## RECORE

Not quite the Joule in the crown

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

► Reviewed on **XO** | Also on **PC**

► Publisher **Microsoft Studios**

**VIDEOGAME** For someone who's not had human company for most of her life, Joule has managed to keep herself admirably busy. She's a crack shot with her rifle, for starters, and has adopted a rigorous exercise regime, if the arc of her double-jump is any indication. The industrious so-and-so is a dab hand with electronics, too, manufacturing a pair of dandy rocket boots for dashing across the desert sands of her otherwise uninhabited homeworld.

That's because *ReCore* takes place entirely on Far Eden, a dusty marble that was selected as a prime terraforming candidate once Earth fell victim to a future-plague. Exactly why the terraforming effort hasn't proceeded as planned is a mystery at the game's outset, and you're left to wander an open overworld with no one but an excitable robo-dog for company. Naturally, it isn't long before some murderous machines turn up to

kickstart the game's action-adventure narrative.

*ReCore* has many minor faults, and a fair number of them can be banded together under a single subheading: pace. The game bogs you down in delays at every opportunity. Every player death, for instance, is followed by a loading screen of 90 seconds or more, which turns difficult boss battles into cruel and unusual exercises in anger management.

Its missteps often feel like desperate padding, but *ReCore* is not a short game, offering at least a dozen hours of play. Had it been trimmed back to six-to-eight hours, and a greater focus been placed on dungeon design rather than scouring the overworld, it'd be an easy recommendation.

It's unfortunate but all too appropriate that *ReCore* manages to bury the core of a strong game in a weird, spiny exoskeleton. Like Joule, you'll have to do some work if you're going to extract that worthwhile kernel of knockabout, old-school fun from *Armature's* adventure. **James Nouch**

**i** Writer Joseph State was influenced by *The Jungle Book* and *Peter Pan*. He says there's "a little bit of Wendy" in Joule.



By week three Ted had turned into a bat.

## MINA MURRAY'S JOURNAL

Blog For Dracula

★★★★★

► **RELEASED** Twice weekly

until 3 November

► Writer/director **James Moran**

**WEB SERIES** "It's as if they had the internet in Victorian times," laughs would-be vlogger Mina Murray (Rosie Holt), when she notices the app she's using is anachronistically named WebJournal. Really, what she's doing is cluing us into the premise of *Mina Murray's Journal*. This 15-part web series is an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but instead of writing letters and recording their thoughts on wax cylinders, the characters turn to YouTube.

*Doctor Who/Torchwood* scribe James Moran makes several smart updates to the novel, shuffling characters around so that it's office junior Mina who travels to Romania to meet the mysterious Count, while back home John (Liam Dryden) starts sleepwalking. But don't worry – the vampires are still definitely vampires, with transmogrification powers very much intact. No blood gets spilled on camera, but even so, several episodes will raise goosebumps.

Creepy and clever, it has an irresistibly likeable cast and an admirable commitment to the webcam conceit. This season covers roughly the first 10 chapters of Stoker's novel, and ends on a cliffhanger that'll make you wanna dig out the book to pass the time until season two. **Sarah Dobbs**

**i** Several characters from the series also tweet, blog, and use Instagram – see [www.minasjournal.com](http://www.minasjournal.com) for links.





## COLLECTABLES

What we've been playing with this month

**1** Earning a coveted place in the Millennium Falcon's draining rack (it probably has one) is this **"Laugh it up fuzzball" mug** (RRP £6.99). Adorned with a portrait of Chewbacca – looking a little like a disgruntled Bee Gee after an overdose of Regaine – it's a daily reminder of one of the zingiest retorts in movies. Admire the retro

'70s styling as you munch a cookie with your Wookiee.

**2** There are few acceptable places for glitter. The cheeks of Marc Bolan circa 1972, for example, or unicorn-themed collages made by five-year-olds. In general, however, it's a pernicious menace, thanks to its uncanny ability to distribute

itself to every bodily crevice – if you're one of those fiends who sprinkles it inside Christmas card envelopes we hope you burn very slowly in a special glittery hell. However, we accept its use on these **DC coin purses** (FPI price £5.99 each; product codes F3934, F3935): we've given both a good firm rub and it doesn't seem likely to flake off in your pocket. Phew.

**3** Run out of utility belt compartments in which to store your lippie, nail file and tissues? Then you'll want this **Batman cross-body bag** (FPI price £24.99; product code F3943). Made of polyurethane, it has a big gold Bat-logo on the front, and a smaller one on the derriere. How terribly bling. The gold chain strap clips on at both sides, meaning you can always detach it should you suddenly feel the urge to do some Mr T cosplay, or wish to whirl it in the face of an assailant, ninja-style. KA-THWACK!

**4** Shame the stars of the movies aren't as malleable as these **Marvel Mr Potato Head PopTaters** (FPI price £17.99



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# Reviews



5



7

each; product codes F2368, F3183, F3184) – we'd be morbidly fascinated to see Scarlett Johansson detach her hairpiece, or Benedict Cumberbatch pull off his facial features, leaving only a chilling blank with a gaping central hole. Until such surrealist nightmares become a reality we'll have to make do with these spud simulacras of Black Widow, Black Panther and Dr Strange. Hawkeye and Falcon are also available, should anyone care. No, thought not.

**5** It'd be useless as the headpiece of a crime-fighting super-suit, but in the world of biscuit storage this beautifully painted and sculpted **Iron Man cookie jar** (FPI price

£23.99; product code F2035) is royalty. Our one quibble? Surely someone could have thought up a way to make the faceplate open, rather than having snack access via a removable lid on the back of his head. Get working on it, Stark!

**6** Which is the cooler shaker? You can have your very own civil war over condiments with these **Avengers Pop! Home salt and pepper shakers** (FPI price £14.99; product code F3068). Cap's nominally responsible for the salt, which seems to contradict his healthy, clean-cut image – we reckon Tony Stark's much more likely to sprinkle it on, even after his history of heart problems. Then again, perhaps someone at

Funko just figured he's always loved Pepper...? Red and black-suited Spideys (product code F3069) have been given similar cruet-y treatment.

**7** This **Superman jigsaw** (RRP £12.99) challenges you to the tricky mission of assembling the cover of *Action Comics* issue 419. When completed it measures 50cm by 30cm. At 500 pieces it should keep you busy for some time. Our hot tip: do all the edges first. Inside the box you'll find a glossy A2 poster of the same Neal Adams art. Manufacturer Half Moon Bay has also brought out a 500-piece Batman jigsaw, featuring the cover of *Detective Comics* #566. ●

## THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



### DC METALS FIGURES

◆ Why make do with vinyl when you can have metal (makes sign of the horns and headbangs)? Metal Earth is bringing out oodles of variations on comics heroines like Wonder Woman, Supergirl and Batgirl – each stands 4" tall.



### BAT-COW PLUSH

◆ The increasingly bizarre DC Super-Pets range continues. Yes, there really was a Bat-Cow, in Grant Morrison's *Batman Incorporated* – though it looked nowt like this. Plushes of Harley Quinn's hyenas Crackers and Giggles are also on the way.



### BOSSK FIGURE

◆ Our basic grasp of maths tells us that this 1:6 Sideshow Collectibles figure of the *Star Wars* bounty hunter stands 12" high. He comes with two sets of hands, all the better to grip the replica of his micro grenade launcher with.

Photography by Olly Curtis





SEASON 2

Control your excitement, viewers – it's mealtime!

## DARK MATTER

Mission creep for the Raza crew

▶ UK Broadcast Syfy, finished  
 ▶ US Broadcast Syfy, finished  
 ▶ Episodes Reviewed 2.01-2.12

**You know how in DVD** making-ofs sci-fi scriptwriters will insist that their show is actually all about the characters and not spaceships, or zombies, or mutant giraffes or whatever? That must go tenfold for the writers of *Dark Matter*. Not because the characters are particularly great, but because outside of the charismatic main cast the show has very little new to offer. It's just a greatest hits megamix of previous spaceship-based shows with different faces.

Season one at least had the conceit of its amnesiac crew to stop it being a mere *Battlestar-Trek-Blake-lactica* composite. But with season two a lot of the mystery surrounding their various backgrounds has been cleared up, while the remaining mysteries are being rationed in a way that suggests the writers' room is well aware the show's USP is in danger of vanishing down a black hole. So what we're left with is a show that's mostly about a motley group of rebels on a ship – including an android who wants to be more human – battling against corrupt BIG ORGANISATIONS. And, yes,

halfway through the season the crew even acquires a handy new infinite improbability drive which makes their ship, the Raza, the most powerful ship in the galaxy.

It does all sound awfully familiar doesn't it? The weekly plots have a similarly warmed-up leftovers feel (yes, we get the alternate universe episode with evil versions of the regulars!). And while the show's familiarity doesn't exactly breed contempt it does breed reaching-for-your-mobile-to-play-Solitaire-halfway-through-each-episode. You don't want to switch it off, but it's difficult to keep paying *full* attention.

### ZOOM IN



#### BEST EPISODE ▲

→ "Sometimes In Life You Don't Get To Choose" (2.12), in which Zairon politics finally get interesting when Four goes psycho-Emperor.

#### TRIVIA

→ With Kris Holden-Ried turning up in ep 2.05, now all three of the actors who played Bo's main lovers in *Lost Girl* have been in *Dark Matter*.

#### MORE TRIVIA

→ In *Lost Girl* Holden-Ried played werewolf Dyson, while *Dark Matter*'s Anthony Lemke (Three), Zoie Palmer (the Android) were Ryan Lambert and Dr Lewis respectively.

#### DID YOU SPOT

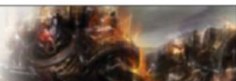
→ "Stuff To Steal, People To Kill" (2.08) bears many resemblances to *Red Dwarf*'s "Parallel Universe" and even namechecks a company called "Dwarf Star Technologies".

#### BEST MOMENT ▼

→ The titular scene in "Kill Them All" (2.02) when Five gives the Android a command that the bad guys aren't expecting.







## ★ BEST IN SHOW ★

The characters who make TV great



## CISCO RAMON

Barry Allen may be *The Flash*, but we all know who the real star of the show is

► UK Broadcast Sky 1, TBC ► US Broadcast The CW, Tuesdays

❖ Much as we loved the gritty, ultra-real world of *Arrow*, by the end of series two we had to admit the constant death and darkness felt a little oppressive. Then, spinning out of Barry Allen's appearance in a mid-season episode came *The Flash* – the adorable, entertaining series in which everyone seemed to be having fun. And no one encapsulated this sheer joy more than geeky physicist Cisco Ramon.

From the off we recognise that here is One Of Us – not only is Cisco of the opinion that superpowers are an amazing, wonderful thing, but he's also a proud sci-fi and film geek, is the character who gives the villains they face their cool comic-book names, and even designs and makes Barry's Flash costume. (Aah, for his cosplay skills.) He's us – well, the genius physicist version of us we've always dreamed of being, the person who will turn up for work in a Han

Shot First t-shirt and pepper his conversations with Indiana Jones quotes and *Ghostbusters* shout-outs.

Despite his cheeriness, life doesn't always go smoothly for Cisco, with his first genuinely promising love interest turning out to be Hawkgirl, who leaves him for a *Legends Of Tomorrow* gig. And he originally wasn't that thrilled with the promise of powers of his own, hiding them from the others and later worrying that developing his abilities will lead him down the path to the Dark Side. But eventually he takes on the Vibe mantle and we're cheering him on.

With season three almost upon us, the Flashpoint universe version of Cisco promises to be a very different interpretation of the character – a smug, ostentatious tech billionaire. Let's just hope we see our fun-loving Cisco back before too long. **Rhian Drinkwater**



Five (Jodelle Ferland) is loving every minute.

It doesn't help that the production design and direction feel stuck in the '90s. Okay, *Dark Matter* clearly doesn't have the biggest budget, but the similarly low-budget *Killjoys* employs funky camerawork, punky designs and slick editing to paper over the cracks. *Dark Matter* instead retains a *Star Trek: The Next Generation* aesthetic; sets that look slightly too small, bland lighting and workmanlike cinematography.

There are some surprises. One (Marc Bendavid) – a major player in season one – is killed off in the first episode... and it isn't a ruse! This leaves room for two new members of the crew, though one, Nyx, remains underused for most of the season while the other, a drug addict medic called Devon, just kinda gets forgotten about then left for dead. The acquisition of the blink drive – hoary old SF cliché though it might be – at least gives the show a new direction. And revelations about both Two and Four have you spluttering into your cocoa.

So the occasional plot bomb combined with the charm of the

“Production design feels stuck in the '90s”

central cast keep the show watchable. It just rarely feels like essential viewing, especially now a lot of the mystery has gone. Season two replaces “who are we?” with “what do we do now then?” and doesn't ever come up with a decent answer. The Raza flies through a series of disjointed adventures against a vague backdrop of conspiracy and intergalactic war between shadowy power blocs. Mini-arcs for each character try to fill the void – the android and Two go through some particularly fascinating developments – but they don't hide the fact that the show lacks a sense of direction. The more the main characters remember the less memorable the show becomes. **Dave Golder**



Corridors and brown clothes, ooh yeah.



Laurel: hardy.



SEASON 1

## BRAINDEAD

### Bugs in the system

► **UK Broadcast** Amazon, finished  
 ► **US Broadcast** CBS, finished  
 ► **Episodes Reviewed** 1.01-1.13

◉ **American politics has become** increasingly polarised of late, with Bernie Bros and the Alt Right hurling accusations of fascism or communism across the political divide, usually with CAPS LOCK ON AND MULTIPLE EXCLAMS!!! A full explanation for this would probably encompass the impact of globalisation, the growth of social media and changing demographics. But *BrainDead* has a simpler answer: alien bugs are eating people's brains.

*Scott Pilgrim's* Mary Elizabeth Winstead plays Laurel Healy, a liberal documentarian who goes to work for her brother Luke, a Democratic Senator. Soon she

discovers that insects from a meteor are taking over Capitol Hill – marching, like lines of ants, into people's ears as they sleep, and scheming to keep humanity divided.

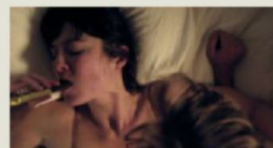
It's an irresistible premise, and one which creators Michelle and Robert King use to mix a winningly strange brew: part political satire, part *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* and part gory horror-comedy, with elements of sweet romance and goofy slapstick stirred in too.

Winstead is charming in the central role, but the show is stolen by Tony Shalhoub as Senator Red Wheatus, a gimlet-eyed, bug-controlled Republican with a penchant for Trumpian one-liners like, "I could go out on Fifth Avenue with a flamethrower and they'd still kiss my feet!"

The establishing episodes are hugely entertaining, though the season's later stages do find the series rather treading water; after one too many committees and hearings, you may find yourself wishing they'd focus on the central issue. It also must be said that as a political satire, *BrainDead* can't match the rapier wit of, say, *Veep*. But then, does *Veep* have exploding heads? No.

The show's most memorable innovation comes in an unexpected quarter: the "previously on" montages, which recap the preceding episode through the medium of an original song! It's a quirky little touch emblematic of a show which may not rock your world – or change the way you vote – but which remains immensely likeable. **Ian Berriman**

## ZOOM IN



### BEST MOMENT ▲

→ In episode six, the bugs get into Lauren's head, but she forces them out by inducing a dopamine high. This involves frantically having sex while snacking on both chocolate and a massive salami...

### BEST LINE

→ Red Wheatus: "Why don't you take your Tupperware of monkey brains and think about whether you want to make a documentary. And yes, that's the first time I've used that sentence." (1.11)

### TRIVIA

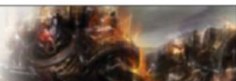
→ One way you can spot the bug-people is that they can't stop playing "You Might Think", a 1984 track by The Cars. Music supervisor Jason Harkins also considered using REM's "Stand".

### WEIRDEST CAMEO EVER

→ In episode nine we see Laurel having sex with Michael Moore (yes, the real Michael Moore!), in a shot-for-shot recreation of a flashback from *Eyes Wide Shut*. "It was an experience," says Winstead...







## LINE UP

The month's most quotable dialogue

KRYTEN

"I love dust. After fluff it's my all-time favourite dirt."

Red Dwarf,  
Episode 11.02

JOHNNY

"Wow, whoever programmed this is an asshole."

D'AVIN

"Yeah, well my asshole's bigger than his asshole. I mean you're smarter than... Whatever, just kick his nerd ass."

Killjoys,  
Episode 2.09

COTTONMOUTH

"Jesus saves. I don't."

Luke Cage,  
Episode 1.02

DOLORES  
ABERNATHY

"These violent delights meet violent ends."

Westworld,  
Episode 1.01

ARNOLD RIMMER

"Let me tell you, me laddo. There are plenty of young, thrusting lifts round here that would give their eye teeth to transport someone of my stature up and down their shaft."

Red Dwarf,  
Episode 11.03

## SCRIPT EASE

A TV season distilled

SEASON 2

# KILLJOYS

Where every night is karaoke night

► UK Broadcast Syfy, finished

► US Broadcast Syfy, finished

► Episodes Reviewed 2.01-2.10

**The Royale, Old Town Westerly. Bar owner Pree, John Barrowman's brother from another mother, is MCing at a karaoke night. Killjoys Dutch, D'avin and Johnny are in the crowd. Everyone else in the bar is a Six. What's a Six? Depending on when in the season we are: a) dunno; b) some sort of green-plasma-bloodied supersoldier; c) everyone in the entire show except Pree, the Killjoys and assorted cannon fodder.**

**PREE**

In the spirit of "If you can't beat them join them", we've decided to stop trying to battle against the pop songs on the show's soundtrack and just sing the bloody scripts instead.

**D'AVIN**

Dutch, you should do "Papa Don't Preach" cos your dad, Khlyen, is orchestrating the whole arc plot this season.

**DUTCH**

But I wanted to do "I Will Survive".

**JOHNNY**

Hey, D'avin. Remember that scene when you shagged Sabine and she was a secret Six and the plasma in your body made her bleed green goo?

**D'AVIN**

Yep, I've had better dates.

**JOHNNY**

Maybe you could do Bon Jovi's "You Give Love A Bad Name".

**PREE**

I had "It's Not Easy Being Green" cued up for that one.

**D'AVIN**

Johnny, you should do "Automatic Lover" because of the way you get all fast-pulsey every time the AI on our ship speaks.

**JOHNNY**

Hey! I'm dating Doctor Pawter. I was gonna sing "Dr Beat".

**PREE**

Don't forget the Company has set up this wall around Old Town that makes us all docile drones.

**ALL KILLJOYS  
IN UNISON**

All in all it's just "Another Brick In The Wall".

**DUTCH**

What about when Jelco kidnapped Pawter to make her operate on his dicky ticker and she planted a bomb in his chest instead?

**JOHNNY**

Right! "Don't Go Breaking My Heart"! Sweet!

**D'AVIN**

We've gotta do Nirvana's "Heart-Shaped Box".

**DUTCH**

Why?

**D'AVIN**

Cos there was an episode called that this season. It's the one where I stripped to my pants and sat in a fish tank with Sabine.

**PREE**

"Strangelove"?

**JOHNNY**

Ah! We have to "Live Forever"! Cos that's what the Sixes can do, unless we thrust a big pointy stick in their brains.

**DUTCH**

"Can't Get You Out Of My Head"?

**D'AVIN**

That's just sick...

**DUTCH**

Let's face it, the best bits of this show are the sickest.

**Dave Golder**

SPURIOUS  
AWARDS  
WILL RETURN  
NEXT ISSUE





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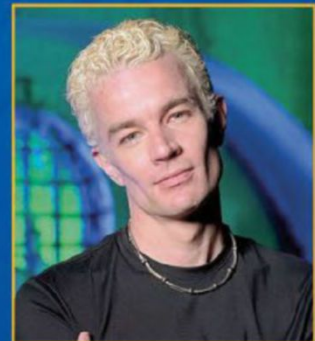
**ALLISON MACK**  
SMALLVILLE



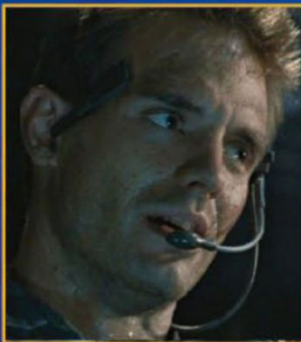
**TOM WLASCHIHA**  
GAME OF THRONES



**MANU BENNETT**  
ARROW



**JAMES MARSTERS**  
BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER



**MICHAEL BIEHN**  
ALIENS



**FREYA TINGLEY**  
ONCE UPON A TIME



**CHRISTOPHER SABAT**  
DRAGONBALL Z



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# SPORT

Give your brain a warm up... On your marks, get set, go!

Quizmaster Ian Berriman, Reviews Editor

## QUESTION 1

Which *Doctor Who* star played for the youth teams of Northampton Town, Nottingham Forest and Leicester City?

## QUESTION 2

In the *Star Trek* universe, which potentially dangerous contact sport involves an Ion Mallet?

## QUESTION 3

In which television series did the Son of God perform a miracle at Manchester City's old Maine Road stadium?

## QUESTION 4

Who wrote the *X-Files* episode "The Unnatural", which centres on a baseball player who's actually an alien?

## QUESTION 5

In which '80s *Doctor Who* story do we see people playing "non-gravity squash"?

## QUESTION 6

Which dystopian film from 1975 ends with Houston beating New York 1-0?

## QUESTION 7

Which young boy was the first human to win the annual Boonta Eve Classic?

## QUESTION 8

Which Enterprise crew member called water polo "the best sport in the world"?

## QUESTION 9 PICTURE QUESTION

What word has been redacted from this 1978 movie poster? (It's the title of the film.)



## QUESTION 9

## QUESTION 10

In which classic dystopian novel would you find mention of the sports Escalator Squash, Electro-Magnetic Golf and Centrifugal Bumble-Puppy?

## QUESTION 11

Where could you read all about the rules of Brockian Ultra-Cricket?

## QUESTION 12

Which TV series features Koshi, a martial art that involves bouncing up and down on two trampolines on either side of a tank full of water?

## QUESTION 13 PICTURE QUESTION

What's the name of this baseball player, a hero of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*'s Benjamin Sisko?



## QUESTION 13



## QUESTION 17

## QUESTION 14

In which sport does each team have three Chasers, two Beaters, one Keeper and one Seeker?

## QUESTION 15

In *Buffy*, which English football team does Spike mention as one good reason why *not* to destroy the world? (Remember: he's evil.)

## QUESTION 16

Which Batman film features the collapse of Gotham City Stadium?

## QUESTION 17 PICTURE QUESTION

What's the name of this sport, from the original 1978 version of *Battlestar Galactica*?

## QUESTION 18

What sport does the Doctor play in 1982 *Who* story "Black Orchid"?

## QUESTION 19

In the *Twilight Zone* episode "Steel", written by Richard Matheson, which sport is now performed only by robots?

## QUESTION 20

Soccer team DC United's Robert F Kennedy Memorial Stadium was an important location for which superhero movie?

**Answers**  
1 Matt Smith 2 Parrises Squares 3 The Second Coming 4 David Duchovny 5 "The Leisure Hive" 6 Jonathan Archer 9 Deathsport 14 Quidditch 15 Manchester United 16 The Dark Knight Rises 17 Triad (NB it's called Pyramid in the remake) 18 Cricket 19 Boxing 20 X-Men: Days Of Future Past

## How did you do?

What prize are you taking home?



→ 0-5  
Wooden spoon



→ 6-10  
Personal best



→ 11-15  
Bronze medal



→ 16-19  
Silver medal



→ 20  
Gold medal



# Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



## GOLD KEY STAR TREK COMICS

Nick Setchfield, Features Editor

**A** blond Scotty? An Enterprise with blazing rocket exhausts? A bat-eared Spock bravely rocking a red shirt? *Star Trek* has often warped into parallel worlds: slipstream realities that take our 23rd century heroes and twist them into peculiar new shapes. But the freakiest final frontier can be found within the pages of the show's first comic book.

Gold Key's *Star Trek* is a relic from a long lost civilisation that didn't believe in corporate branding teams or fastidious guardians of canon. Its Rome-based artists had never even seen the series, so built their own universe from European imagination and a fistful of Paramount publicity stills. The writers were American but had clearly spun the TV tuning dial to a rival channel. How else to explain Kirk crying "Suffering sun spots!" in times of peril? I'd still kill to hear Shatner declaim that one.

As a kid these anomalies barely registered on my sensor scan. I was too busy being thrilled – and chilled. Gold Key's *Star Trek* pulsed with "weird, deep space voodoo", as one breathless caption put it. Take "The



Haunted Asteroid" in issue 19, where the Enterprise encounters "a jewel-encrusted orbiting mausoleum," carved by 20,000 robot labourers as a shrine to a dead space princess. It's "a thing of supernatural dread", we're told. On the cover a woman plucks a skull from a pyre of bones as Spock phasers a cosmic harpy.

These painted covers were lush and lurid. On one a genie snatches the Enterprise from the stars. On another a pirate galleon sails among the nebulae. Full of a heady pulp charm, spicy and macabre, they feel like the crew's delirium dreams.

For all their howlers these comics are, at heart, authentic. They preserve something that's been lost on the screen since the '60s: that shiver of the uncanny, the cosmic spookiness that made the original series a swashbuckling sister to *The Twilight Zone*.

To me that jagged logo remains the primal essence of *Star Trek*. It took us to the strangest of strange new worlds. ●

Nick always sets his watch to "outer-galaxy time".

### Fact Attack!

→ Gold Key's *Star Trek* ran for 61 issues between 1967 and 1979, when Marvel won the licence just in time for *The Motion Picture*.

→ The strip revisited such familiar TV characters as Harry Mudd, the Guardian of Forever, Zefram Cochrane and the Companion.

→ One of the regular writers of the Gold Key comic was Len Wein, who would go on to co-create Wolverine for Marvel in 1974.

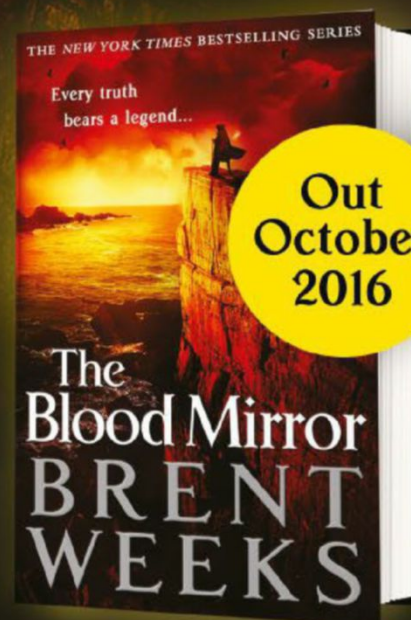
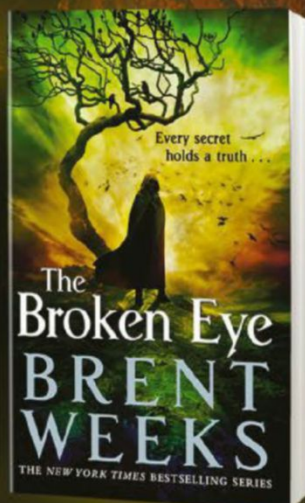
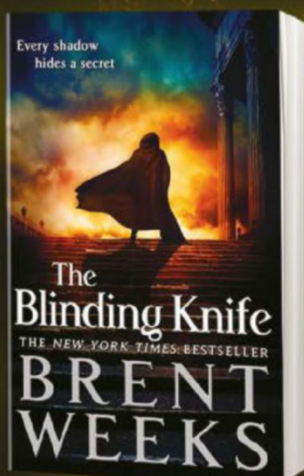
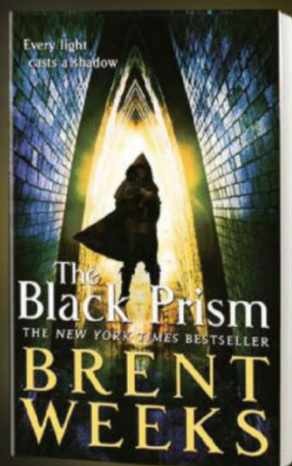
→ In Britain the strips were reprinted in a run of annuals, alongside such filler as Sulu's Double U Word Quiz and *Star Trek* Riddle-Me-Ree.

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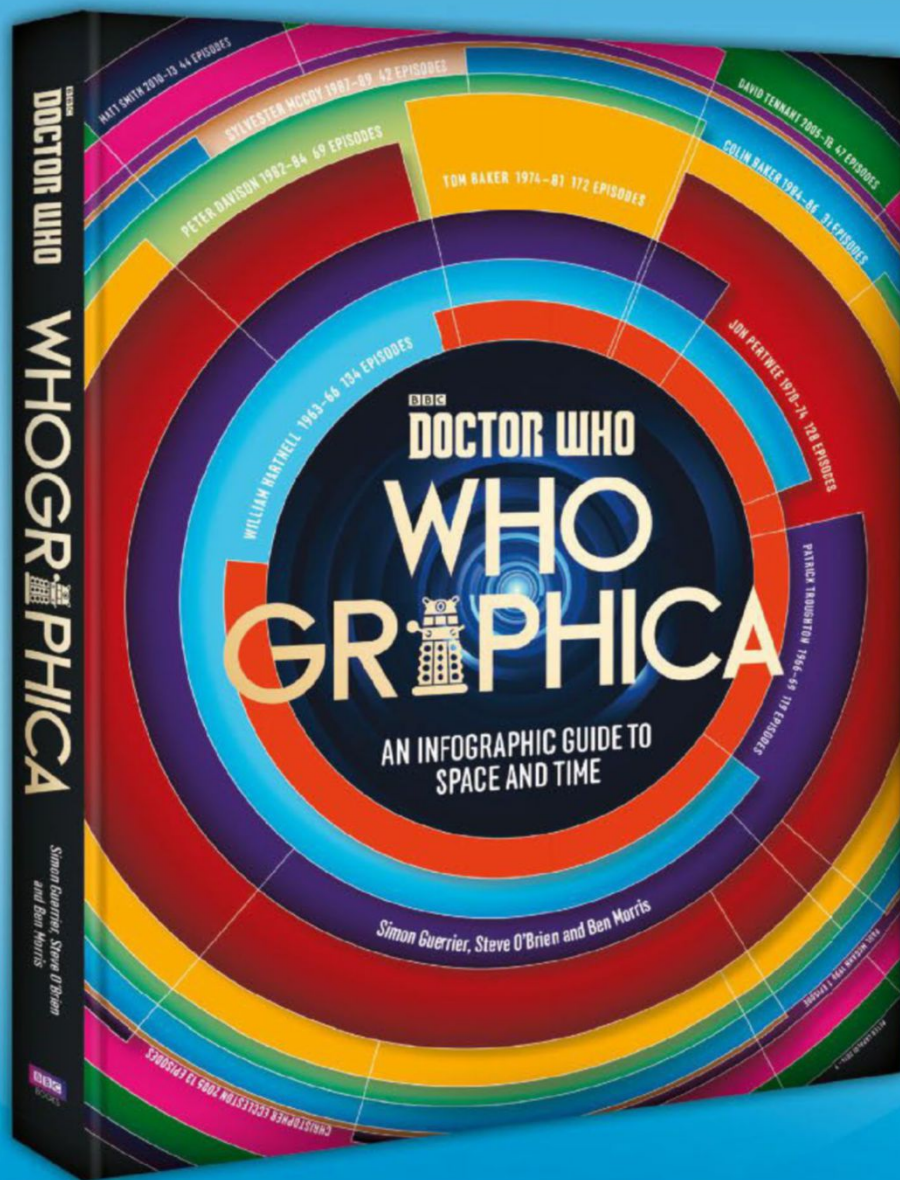
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